

STUDIES IN ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE

THE TAILORING TRADE

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STUDIES IN ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

EDITED BY W. A. S. HEWINS, M.A.

SELECT DOCUMENTS

I. THE TAILORING TRADE

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9 JOHN STREET, ADELPHI, LONDON, W.C.

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STUDIES IN ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE are in course of publication under the editorship of the Director of the School.

All communications should be addressed to the Director, W. A. S. HEWINS, M.A., The London School of Economics and Political Science, 9 John Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.

T DOCUMENTS

ILLUSTRATING THE HISTORY OF
TRADE UNIONISM

I. THE TAILORING TRADE

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

F. W. GALTON

WITH A PREFACE BY

SIDNEY WEBB, LL.B.

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STUDIES IN ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

EDITED BY W. A. S. HEWINS, M.A.

Arrangements have been made for the publication of a series of books containing the results of researches in economic and political subjects conducted by the teachers of the London School of Economics and Political Science, or under their direction. The following volumes are in preparation:—

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2. SELECT DOCUMENTS ILLUSTRATING THE HISTORY OF TRADE UNIONISM. I. THE TAILORING TRADE. Edited by F. W. GALTON. With a Preface by SIDNEY WEBB, LL.B.
3. THE REFERENDUM IN SWITZERLAND. By SIMON DEPLOIGE, University of Louvain. Translated, with Introduction and Notes, by C. P. TREVELYAN, M.A., Trinity College, Cambridge.
4. SELECT DOCUMENTS ILLUSTRATING THE STATE REGULATION OF WAGES. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by W. A. S. HEWINS, M.A., Pembroke College, Oxford; Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science.
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6. THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE. By Miss E. A. MAC ARTHUR, Vice-Mistress of Girton College, Cambridge.
7. GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY. By the Hon. BERTRAND RUSSELL, B.A., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

PREFACE

THIS volume has for its basis a remarkable series of documents relating to the London tailoring trade, which have been, until lately, practically unknown to economic students. They begin in 1721 with a graphic description by the "Master Taylors residing within the Cities of London and Westminster" of the Trade Union formed by the 15,000 journeymen tailors of the Metropolis, and of their strike for better conditions of employment. With the possible exception of the clubs of the woollen workers of the West of England, whose tumultuous strikes occurred about the same time, this organisation of the London tailors is the earliest recorded Trade Union of the modern type. In the subsequent documents and contemporary references, unearthed by Mr. Galton's ingenious industry, we are able to keep the trade constantly under our eye. We see the tailor, at that time always working on his employer's premises and paid by the day, kept close to his toil from six in the morning until nine at night. We follow to the very end his long struggle against the uniform legal rate of wages imposed upon him by the employers. We watch him at one moment succumbing to the law, at another profiting by the perennial anomalies of London government; playing off now the City against the rest of the

Metropolis, now Westminster against the City. We are able to trace his gradual increase of wages and diminution of hours, a progress constantly interrupted by the pressure of "the unemployed," and by the enormous fluctuations in the trade caused by the periods of "Court mourning." We watch the working of the curious system of the "House of Call," and we see the coming in of piecework, now universal in the trade. We may even, towards the close of the history, trace the beginnings of the pernicious system of giving out work to be done in the men's own homes, which has been, for the last fifty years, the special bane of the industry. We have, in fact, in this unique series of contemporary pictures of the tailoring trade, extending over a century and a quarter, most interesting materials, both for the story of the industry itself, and for that economic history of the eighteenth century of which we are all so much in need.

The fact that these interesting documents are now collected and published for the first time indicates how little has yet been done in England in the way of historical research into the development of particular trades during the past two centuries. It might have been supposed that Professor Brentano's brilliant essay in 1870, breaking, as it did, absolutely new ground, would have attracted attention to this fertile field. Unfortunately, very little has been done to follow up his valuable work, and although we have now important treatises on older economic history and the general industrial development of the country, the student who would devote his attention to the annals of particular trades would still find quarries of the most valuable economic material as yet almost

wholly unworked. And it may be some encouragement to the adventurer in these regions to be reminded that, notwithstanding his extensive and most successful researches into eighteenth century trades, Professor Brentano found none of the documents which Mr. Galton has collected, and was driven to declare that, "in the Tailors' trade also combinations must have existed early in the eighteenth century, as the 7th Geo. I. c. 13 forbade them. I could, however, find nothing as to the cause of these combinations in the Journals of the House of Commons. . . . In any case, however, the combinations of the tailors seem to have been but transitory, and not to have led to the formation of lasting Trade Unions. At least, during the entire eighteenth century we hear no more of combinations of journeymen, and not even the 8th Geo. III. c. 17 makes mention of them."¹

If one trade can be made to yield so much, it is unlikely that others would be quite barren.

How faithfully and diligently Mr. Galton has done his work the student will easily determine. The ingenuity and perseverance with which he has investigated every accessible source of information about the tailoring trade since the year 1700 may be inferred both from the number and diversity of his references, and from his success in discovering documents and materials hitherto unknown. In his introduction he has put together this matter in a connected form, thus giving us practically the annals of the English tailoring trade during the last two hundred years. I cannot

¹ "On the History and Development of Gilds and the Origin of Trade Unions," by L. Brentano, pp. clxxviii. and clxxix. Prefixed to the volume of the Early English Text Society on "English Gilds," edited by Toulmin Smith.

refrain from adding a word of personal reference, which should make this work of special interest to those who watch the new drifts and influences of a nation's life. It is the outcome, not of the Universities and of the subsidised leisure from which our historical research has, in the past, almost exclusively sprung, but of the Board School and the artisan's bench. When more of our skilled craftsmen take to historical researches, and more of our business men and public officials to economic studies, we may perhaps anticipate, if not a new history and a new economics, at any rate a new focussing of the mental telescope. And I venture to think that the London School of Economics and Political Science will render good service if it promotes this end.

SIDNEY WEBB.

May 1896.

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INTRODUCTION

TRADE UNIONISM among journeymen tailors appears to have first arisen in the early years of the eighteenth century.¹ There is evidence that various trade clubs of journeymen tailors were formed between the years 1710 and 1730, and that they began actively to interest themselves in the affairs of the trade in many of the larger towns. In London, Dublin, and Cambridge there is actual proof of their existence in the years 1720-25, and we are not without some grounds for the inference that a similar movement among these workmen in other towns was taking place

¹ It is not proposed in this volume to attempt to describe any forms of organisation in the tailors' trade other than Trade Unions in the modern sense; that is to say, durable associations of journeymen workmen in the trade. The merchant and craft guilds are therefore not referred to, as they did not in any case consist exclusively of journeymen, nor does there appear to be any connection between them and the Trade Unions described in this volume. Nor, on the other hand, has it been thought necessary to describe the attempts of the tailors' "serving men and journeymen" in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to form assemblies and associations. Very little evidence exists in regard to these conspiracies, but, so far as can be judged, they do not appear to have amounted in any case to more than very temporary revolts against particular acts of tyranny upon the part either of the employers or of the guilds. For a full discussion of this point with reference to the tailors, as well as to other trades, see the "History of Trade Unionism," by S. & B. Webb, chap. i.

about the same time.¹ The earliest trustworthy contemporary reference to the existence of such an organisation occurs in 1721, when the master tailors of London presented a petition to the House of Commons complaining of the combination and strike of their journeymen. It is clear from a perusal of this document that it referred to a

¹ The Tailors' Society of Sheffield is said to have been established originally in 1720. In an article descriptive of the Society which appeared in the *Sheffield Iris* of August 8, 1820, it is stated that "the Tailors' Society is the oldest sick club in the town," and it is alleged that "it was formed on the 20th September 1720, by a combination of tailors not to work for an unreasonable length of time for their employers." It is added that "the original deed was seen by the Editor, wherein it was stated that from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. were the usual hours, which they considered too long, and in future resolved to work no longer than six in the evening for any man, any one doing so to be fined 5/-." On the other hand, the issue of the *Sheffield Iris* of August 5, 1823, announces that on that day the Sheffield Tailors' Club held its one hundredth anniversary celebration.

In Newcastle-on-Tyne, also, where trade friendly clubs flourished very early, the tailors appear to have been among the first thus organised. There is preserved in the British Museum a copy of the "Rules, Orders, and Regulations of the Friendly Society of Tailors, held at the house of Mr. Edward Burn, sign of the Two Bulls' Heads, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Established on the 12th day of August 1723;" Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1825, 12 pp. 12mo. I have not reprinted these articles, because at the time of their issue in 1825 the club no longer consisted exclusively of tailors, if it had ever done so. For the preamble states that, "We, the several persons signing these presents, and whose respective places of abode and *trades* . . . are set down and written immediately after our respective names," &c.; and there is nothing in the Rules of a trade character, or which would in any way confine the membership to those who were tailors. It is possible that this was originally formed as a tailors' club, and afterwards turned into a general sick club, such as these Rules portray. At any rate, there is no satisfactory evidence of its existence as a trade combination at the time when it is alleged to have been established.

definite combination of journeymen wage-workers, striking for higher day-wages and shorter hours of work, against their capitalist employers. It is asserted in this petition that the men's combination was of recent origin, and a diligent search has failed to reveal any evidence of its previous existence. Nevertheless we may, I think, infer from the subsequent events that the origin of the organisation was not so recent as the employers supposed. Whatever may have been the origin of the "house of call" system of conducting the industry, it is probable that the men frequenting these taverns had quickly been led to form some kind of organisation among themselves. This would probably have taken the form, at first, of a friendly society to provide for the burial of deceased members, any trade action being confined to regulating and equalising the turns or shares of work amongst all the "callers" at the house. And it was perhaps owing to the pressure of some powerful economic force that these clubs were led in 1721 to commence an active interference in trade affairs.¹ The size and importance which these combinations had assumed in that year may well lead us to infer that they had already been in existence for at any rate some years. It is difficult to believe that a new organisation could suddenly have become powerful enough to withstand the opposition of the employers, and the prosecution and imprisonment of its leaders, as this combination did, and at the same time rich enough to provide the large sums of money necessary

¹ We shall see presently a somewhat similar evolution of the trade friendly club into the Trade Union in the case of the journeymen tailors of Dublin.

to support the strike and to employ counsel to plead its cause before both Houses of Parliament.

Although, therefore, we have no direct knowledge of the existence of these clubs before the outbreak of 1721, it seems probable that they may then have been in existence for some years. It is, however, unlikely that they had existed for a longer period, or that they had ever before become involved in an active trade movement. No positive evidence can be adduced in support of this inference, but there is good reason for believing that the existence of such combinations was unknown, and that their rise was unlikely, or indeed impossible, much before this time. In the first place, it may be assumed that without the existence of a class of lifelong journeymen wage-workers no durable combination was possible. There is some evidence to show that the rise of such a class in this trade occurred about the middle of the seventeenth century. Before that time the wealthy classes appear to have bought their cloth direct from the wholesale clothiers, and to have either taken it to a master working-tailor to make up, or to have kept a tailor in their own household to do such work; while the poor either made their garments themselves or bought second-hand ones. But during the first half of the seventeenth century there began to grow up in London, and probably in other large towns, a class of shopkeeping master tailors who were a source of continual trouble and complaint to the rest of the trade. It is to this period, and to the rise of this class of capitalist *entrepreneurs*, that the growth of a large body of journeymen wage-workers in this trade must, I think, be attributed. Writing upon the question in

1681, the anonymous author of "The Trade of England revived," says:—"Concerning taylers and others being salesmen.—This is another thing that doth add to the great number of shopkeepers, *which was never wont to be formerly*; for although a merchant-tayler is a very ancient trade, yet it is suppos'd that either they themselves did transport those garments that they made, for which reason they were called Merchants as well as Taylers; or else they sold many garments together by wholesale to them that did transport them; *but not one single garment at a time, as now our salemen do*; for if so, then there would have been many of this Trade in London, long before the memory of any man now living; but it's otherwise, for many remember when there were no new garments sold in London as now there are, only old garments at second hand;" and he goes on to urge that these recent intruders upon an old and honourable trade should be forthwith suppressed outright.¹ The truth of this complaint of the recent rise of the class of shopkeeping tailors is borne out by other contemporary evidence. In 1687 the "Master working Taylers, Freemen of the City," presented a lengthy petition to the Lord Mayor of London in reference to the growth of the same abuse. After reciting the various charters and Acts constituting the Company of Merchant Tailors, they complain in warm language of the "great numbers of foreigners and other unlawful workers of divers kinds who pay no duties to the City nor Company (and) have for many years eaten

¹ "The Trade of England revived and the Abuses thereof rectified, &c.; Humbly offered to the present Parliament;" London, 1681, 62 pp. 4to. The italics are mine.

out the bowels of our trade, making us their scorn and derision, and for want of opposition have alwayes mightily increased to the ruin of many of our brethren, their wives and children, and the great impoverishing of many others of them, and to the hurt and damage of us all in the loss of our trades and employments." They add that the Company now refuses to take any steps to redress this grievance, and that unless the Lord Mayor will interfere on their behalf, they will be constrained to petition His Most Gracious Majesty for redress.¹ About twenty years later, having failed to obtain any alleviation of their distresses by these means, they put their threat of an appeal to the monarch into operation. A petition was presented to Queen Anne, in which this grievance, and the inability of the petitioners to obtain redress either from their Company or from the Corporation, are reiterated. They complain once more of the "vast swarms of unlawful workers and other unqualify'd persons who never served any apprenticeship; and . . . have of late years clandestinely broken in upon the taylory trade, and continue unskilfully to work at the same," and they pray for a speedy redress, by charter or otherwise, of their wrongs.²

¹ "A true account of the case between the Worshipful the Master, Wardens and Court of Assistants of the Company of Merchant-Taylors of the City of London, and the Master Working Taylors, Freemen of this City, and members also of the said Company." Guildhall Lib., S. Sh. Fol., 1687; catalogued under *Merchant Taylors*.

² "The case of the Master Cutting Taylors, and all other master workers, duly qualified in the Taylory trade within the Cities of London and Westminster, and the Borough of Southwark, and Weekly Bills of Mortality, &c." Guildhall Lib., S. Sh. Fol., N.D.; catalogued under *Tailors*. The petition is not dated, but mentions the injury done to *Her Majesty's* subjects by the abuses complained of. Queen Anne reigned from 1702 to 1714.

But further evidence of the absence of combinations among the journeymen before those of which we hear in 1721 is to be found in the fact that on no occasion before that year had the master tailors made any complaint of the conduct of their workmen. The Journals of both Houses of Parliament contain notices of frequent appeals from the master tailors between the years 1680 and 1720, but in no one of them, so far as I can discover, was any mention whatever made of the journeymen. There are also preserved, in addition to the two cases already quoted, no fewer than five separate petitions of the master tailors of London presented to Parliament at different times between the years 1702 and 1720. They appear, indeed, to have been constantly running to the House of Commons upon every possible occasion for the redress of their real or fancied grievances, and for the amendment or repeal of various Acts to which they objected. The entire absence from all these documents of any reference to the conduct of their journeymen cannot be taken as other than very strong evidence that no cause of complaint had yet been given by the men.¹ The evidence seems almost irresistibly to show that the combinations of jour-

¹ See "Reasons humbly offer'd by the woollen-drapers, Taylors, &c.;" also "Reasons humbly offered by the Taylors, Button-sellers, &c.;" and "Reasons humbly offered for the making, by a new Bill, several Acts of Parliament more effectual, &c.;" and "Reasons for suppressing the wearing of all cloth, stuff, and other wove buttons, &c.;" and also "Reasons humbly offered for bringing in a Bill for prohibiting the importation of foreign buttons, &c." S. Sh. Fol. None of these are dated; but three of them appear to have been issued during the reign of Queen Anne (1702-14), and two shortly after her death, to which they refer. The master tailors are among the appellants in each case.

neymen tailors were begun some time during the first twenty years of the eighteenth century; that they at first confined themselves exclusively to their lawful and benevolent objects; and that it was only the influence of some powerful outside force which caused them to burst into open trade revolt in 1721. What exactly the causes were which led to that outburst of strikes it is for the economic historian to determine.¹

It was on the 7th of February 1721 that the case of the "Master Taylors residing within the Cities of London and Westminster," to which reference has already been made, was presented and read to the House of Commons. A copy of the petition thus referred to has been preserved.² It asserts that the London journeymen tailors, to the number of 15,000, were now entered into a combination, and engaged in

¹ One further item of evidence as to the absence of trade combinations among the journeymen tailors before this period exists. During the latter half of the seventeenth century there began to be published a number of books of advice and instruction to workmen, labourers, &c. Although most of these deal with the tailors' trade, and describe at length many of the evils and temptations which beset the path of the workmen or apprentices to that craft, no reference is made in any case to the existence of clubs or combinations. It seems reasonable to suppose that, had such bodies existed, the young workman would have been warned by his monitors against their wickedness, in common with the other evils dilated upon. See, for instance, "Instructions for Masters, Traders, Labourers, Apprentices and Servants, Youth and Children;" London, 1699, 12mo, anon. Another edition, London, 1718. A number of others of a similar character were published about this time, and subsequently throughout the whole of the eighteenth century. Many of the later books of this kind describe at length the workmen's combinations and the evils of the houses of call, &c. See, for instance, "The London Tradesman, &c.," by R. Campbell; London, 1747, 8vo.

² Reprinted pp. 1-4.

a strike for alterations in their conditions of employment; and the petitioners prayed that Parliament would consider their grievances, and proceed to enact such legislation as would enable them to cope successfully with this rising of their journeymen. The House of Commons immediately referred the petition to a Committee, charged to examine the matter and report the same, with their opinions thereon.¹ Nine days later the report of this Committee was presented and read to the House, and entered upon the Journals.² It shows that the Committee had been fully convinced of the justice of the employers' complaints, and concludes with the Committee's resolution that, in their opinion, the petitioners had fully proved the allegations contained in their petition.³ In consequence of this favourable report, leave was at once given by the House for a Bill to be brought in to regulate the journeymen tailors "within the Weekly Bills of Mortality," and three members of the Committee were ordered to prepare and bring in a Bill for that purpose.⁴

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 7th February 1720 (1721), vol. xix. p. 416. The date 1720 here stands for 1721, as the parliamentary year ends in March, and until 1752 all official documents were dated accordingly.

² Reprinted pp. 5-6.

³ It is interesting to note that, according to this report, the men had already "entered into articles" for their own government, or, in other words, they had already a code of rules, thus completing the idea of a formal organisation.

⁴ Journals of the House of Commons, 16th February 1720 (1721), vol. xix. p. 424-5. The three members were Mr. Godfrey, the Lord William Powlett, and Mr. Bracebridge. The Bills of Mortality were begun in the Plague year of 1592, when a record of the births and deaths within their respective parishes was compiled by the parish clerks in the City and Southwark. In 1604 St. Bartholomew the Great, Bridewell Precinct, and Trinity in Minories, which were

Meanwhile the masters endeavoured to advance their case by drawing up and presenting a Bill of their own for the consideration of the Committee. No complete copy of this Bill is preserved, but we are able to form a very good notion of its contents from the Abstract, with their observations thereon, which the journeymen published in their own defence.¹ The men's remarks are very shrewd, and directed forcibly against the weak points of the Bill, and they were probably written, or at any rate put into form, by the legal advisers they afterwards employed. We are thus enabled to form some picture of the life of the working tailor at that time. The men's chief complaints are of the long hours spent daily in poring over their work, often by the faint light of candles, and the consequent injury to their health and eyesight, and of the insufficiency of their means, reduced by rising prices and by the very considerable periods of unemployment which were thus early a marked feature of this trade. It is interesting to observe, too, that at this time it is the men who are asking that "each may be rewarded according to his merit," and protesting against a fixed rate of wages for all alike, an attitude which, we shall see, was not adopted by their employers until a century later.

all partly within the City liberties ; and St. Clement Danes, St. Giles in the Fields, St. James Clerkenwell, St. Catherine Tower, St. Leonard Shoreditch, St. Mary in Whitechapel, St. Martin in the Fields, and St. Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, were added. St. Mary at the Savoy was added in 1606, and Westminster in 1626. The parishes of Hackney, Islington, Lambeth, Newington, Rotherhithe, and Stepney were added in 1636. Marylebone, St. Pancras, Paddington, Kensington, and Chelsea were never included in the Weekly Bills.

¹ Reprinted pp. 7-12.

It was not until a month after the House of Commons had ordered the Bill for their regulation to be prepared that the journeymen tailors presented their case or petition against such a measure. This occurred on March 15, and at the same time they prayed the House that they might be heard by their counsel against the said Bill. Their petition was at once referred by the House of Commons to the Committee on the Bill, and it was ordered that they should be heard by counsel before the said Committee if they so desired.¹ The petition thus presented is also preserved.² It reiterates the men's demands for shorter hours and more wages, and for the redress of their other grievances, and differs very little from their observations upon the Abstract of the masters' Bill. The result of this petition, and of the presentation of their case to the Committee by their counsel, appears to have been to secure the journeymen some amendments in the Bill. On March 28th it was reported to the House of Commons that the Committee upon the tailors' Bill had heard the journeymen by their counsel upon their petition, "and that the Committee had made several amendments on the Bill," which were read to the House, and ordered to be taken into consideration the next day.³ On the following day, however, it was again postponed for a day,⁴ and the report of the Committee thus came before the House on March 30, when the amendments made to the Bill

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 15th March 1720 (1721), vol. xix. p. 481.

² Reprinted pp. 13-15.

³ Journals of the House of Commons, 28th March 1721, vol. xix. pp. 499-500.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 29th March 1721, vol. xix. p. 500.

were read, and, we are told, "some of them were disagreed with, and the residue with amendments to some of them were agreed unto by the House," and the Bill was ordered to be engrossed.¹ On April 19, the Bill was sent up to the House of Lords, and was there read a first time the same day.²

The opposition of the journeymen to this measure was not, however, allayed. On April 27 they presented a petition to the House of Lords against it, and prayed to be heard, either by themselves or by counsel, at the Bar of the House in opposition to the Bill. It was thereupon ordered that the Bill should be read a second time on the following Tuesday, and that the petitioners should then be heard by their counsel if they still so wished.³ The Bill was not read on the Tuesday, however, but postponed until Thursday, May 4, when it was read a second time and the journeymen were heard by their counsel against it, the masters being at the same time heard in favour of the Bill. Several witnesses were also examined on oath in relation to the Bill, which was finally ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House on the following Tuesday.⁴ On that day, therefore, the House of Lords went into Committee upon the Bill,⁵ and on May 18 it was read a third time and passed, a message being sent to the Commons to acquaint them that the Lords had

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 30th March 1721, vol. xix. p. 501.

² Journals of the House of Lords, 19th April 1721, vol. xxi. pp. 498-500.

³ *Ibid.*, 27th April 1721, vol. xxi. p. 505.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 4th May 1721, vol. xxi. p. 513.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 9th May 1721, vol. xxi. p. 518.

agreed to the said Bill "without any amendment."¹ The Bill received the royal assent on June 7, 1721.²

The Act thus passed into law seems of so much interest, both for the light it throws on the conditions of the tailors' trade at that period, and as being one of the earliest statutes directed definitely against combinations of journeymen wage-workers, that it is worth reprinting in full.³ How far any effective effort was made to enforce its provisions it is now difficult to judge. Its chief use lay, no doubt, in the power which it placed in the employers' hands to coerce their workmen into obedience, by threats of imprisonment or impressment. We shall see, however, that while it injured temporarily the combinations of the workmen, it certainly did not permanently destroy them, and that, in regard to the hours and wages of the tailors, variations occurred at different times owing to the pressure of the men's organisations, and not in accordance with the law, as well as some which were legally authorised.

The immediate effect of the Act upon the London journeymen appears to have been considerable. It succeeded in frightening them for a time into submission, and in destroying the trade activity of their clubs, which, so far as they still existed, must have been carried on as secret and illegal conspiracies. At any rate for the next twenty years no reference to combinations among the London tailors can be discovered. It is reasonable to assume that this sudden and complete collapse of the well organised

¹ Journals of the House of Lords, 18th May 1721, vol. xxi. p. 525.

² *Ibid.*, 7th June 1721, vol. xxi. p. 535.

³ Reprinted pp. 16-22.

and conducted outburst of 1721, and the subsequent quiescence of the journeymen, were not wholly unconnected with the enactment of this measure.

The sudden rise of combinations among the journeymen tailors thus described was not, however, confined to those in London alone. In the same year that the London journeymen were thus engaged in active trade revolt, their fellow-craftsmen in Cambridge were similarly engaged, as we learn from the report of the case, *R. v. the Journeymen Tailors of Cambridge*.¹ This is interesting as being the first reported case in which workmen were prosecuted for a conspiracy to raise their wages, and it ended in their conviction.² This case also reveals the existence of

¹ Reprinted pp. 23-26.

² See "An Inquiry into the Law of Strikes," by F. D. Longe, p. 31; London 1860, 8vo. The case is also referred to in "The Law of Criminal Conspiracies and Agreements," by R. S. (now Mr. Justice) Wright, pp. 52-3; London, 1873, 8vo; who observes, however, that the report is untrustworthy, as it makes the arguments in the case turn on the Act 7 Geo. I. c. 13, which applied only to the Metropolis. There is a much earlier case, described as "The Case of the Tailors, &c., of Ipswich" ("Coke's Reports," vol. vi. p. 101, Part xi. 53*a*, 11 Jac. I. (1578)), which is sometimes referred to as "The Case of the Journeymen Tailors of Ipswich." But a perusal of the case reveals that it was not really one of a combination of journeymen. It was an action brought by the Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of the "*Scissororum et operatorum pannorum*" (cutters and workers of cloth) of Ipswich, established under royal charter, against one William Sheninge for using the trade of a tailor in that town before presenting himself to the said Master, &c., or making proof that he had served a seven years' apprenticeship, or having been admitted by the said Master, &c., to be a sufficient workman. A by-law of the Master, Wardens, &c., of the Company had declared these steps necessary. It was shown, however, that Sheninge had served a seven years' apprenticeship somewhere, and coming to Ipswich to domestic service, his master had set him to make clothes for the family, and it was for so doing that he was prosecuted by the Company of the trade.

a combination consisting definitely of journeymen tailors, who were striking for an advance of wages above the rates fixed for them by the Justices under the statute of Elizabeth.

In Dublin also, where combinations of workmen in many trades were very early established, the journeymen tailors appear to have been among the first so organised. They were about this time formed into a Friendly Society, based upon a "House of Call" system, as appears from a collection of quaint and curious documents preserved in the British Museum. From 1725 to 1729 there was published annually in Dublin a poem in honour of the "Ancient and loyal Society of Journeymen Taylors" of that city. These poems were published with the consent, and indeed under the direct authority of the Society, a list of the officers being generally appended thereto. The publicity thus given to this organisation must have been considerable, as is shown by the numerous squibs and satires which were issued in reply, one of them being written and printed in London. The poems themselves are occupied chiefly with praises of the charity and benevolence of the Society, which appears to have been a club for the support of the sick, the aged, and the orphans of its members, and for the burial of its dead. Between the poems and the satires, how-

The prosecution was not successful, the judge apparently ruling that although the Company could, by by-laws made under their charter, prevent any one from setting up shop or working for hire as a tailor, yet it could not prevent persons making their own clothes or the clothes of those in whose service they were; and the by-laws of the Company, so far as they appeared to prohibit this, were declared illegal at common law, as being in restraint of trade and not sanctioned by any Act of Parliament.

ever, we can discover a little about the conditions of the trade. The first of these poems, dated 1725,¹ refers to the men as being "wrapt in close Union by the laws they've made," an instance of the way in which the word "Union" first began to be applied to such societies, and which indicates also that a proper code of articles or rules for the government of the Society existed. From the satire written in reply to the poem in the following year, we gather that the Dublin tailors were also subject to those periods of unemployment of which their London brethren had earlier complained;² while another undated satire shows us that the House of Call was a well-known institution in the trade in Dublin as well as in London.³

The publicity sought by this Society, both by the publication of these poems and in its annual processions and dinners, seems to show that at this time it was really, as its name implied, nothing more than a Friendly Society. But in spite of this, and the complete absence of any evidence of interference in trade affairs by the Society at this period, it seems probable that it did not long maintain its exclusively friendly objects. It is significant that the first anti-

¹ Reprinted pp. 27-29.

² "The Triumphant Taylors, or, the Vanquished Lice. A Satyr on the Taylors' Procession, July 25th, 1726;" Dublin, 1726; S. Sh. Fol. The lines are:—

"The louse bites us, 'tis not deny'd
We bite our masters, when we are employ'd,
And they bite all the world beside."

³ "A Satyrical Poem on the Society of Journeymen Taylors"—Dublin, n.d.; S. Sh. Fol.—the first two lines of which are—

"You sorry lousy taylors all
That do resort this house of call."

combination law passed by the Irish Parliament was enacted just at this time,¹ and that it was a measure distinctly aimed, as its wording shows, at combinations of journeymen wage-workers. And although this Act did not apply specifically to tailors, whom it does not mention, it is certainly no less significant that the latest of the batch of poems published by the Tailors' Society of Dublin, and preserved in the British Museum, is dated 1729, the year in which the measure was passed. The conclusion seems irresistible, that one of the effects of this drastic anti-combination law was, if not to dissolve, at any rate to force into secrecy and quiescence, the early organisation of the Dublin tailors.

¹ 3rd Geo. II. c. 14, 1729-30. The statutes at large passed in the Parliaments held in Ireland. Throughout the whole of the proceedings in connection with the enactment of this measure by the Irish Parliament there is a complete absence of any indication of the causes which led to its introduction, or of the particular body or bodies of men against whom it was directed. The first notice of the Bill occurs on 29th October 1729, when, without any previous complaint or mention of the subject, leave was given to bring in the Bill. On December 9 the heads of the Bill were read and amended, and it was ordered to be presented to the Lord Lieutenant for transmission to Great Britain in due form. On 8th April 1730 the Bill was read a first time, and on 13th April it was read a third time and passed, receiving the royal assent from Lord Carteret, the Lord Lieutenant, on 15th April 1730. Throughout there were no petitions or other steps taken either in favour of or against the Bill. It seems most probable, in the absence of other evidence, that it was against the trade clubs of Dublin that the measure was aimed. We know that already, in addition to the tailors there, the smiths, the shoemakers, and the bricklayers and builders were organised in trade Friendly Societies, and it was most likely in response to some outburst of trade activity among one or more of these that the enactment of this law was due. See Journals of the Irish House of Commons, October 1729 and April 1730.

The drastic legislation thus passed in both countries in the years 1720-1730 stopped the trade activity of the tailors' clubs for some twenty years, though it seems probable that those organisations were never actually dissolved. But it is not until 1744 that we again hear of the combinations of the journeymen tailors, and it is then the London workmen whose agitation is recorded. We learn, from a contemporary publication, that on Tuesday, 25th September 1744, "The Master Taylors and staymakers, having represented to His Majesty in Council, that great numbers of journeymen (about 15,000) had enter'd into a combination, refusing to work for the wages established by law, and were supported in it by the keepers of the ale-houses where they resort, that they threatened to fire the masters' houses, and abused those who in obedience to the laws continue to work, the Privy Council, by His Majesty's command, sent a letter to the Duke of Newcastle, Custos Rotulorum of Middlesex, requiring His Grace to recommend to the Justices of the Peace to carry into execution the Act of the 7th of George I., to use their endeavours to prevent all unlawful assemblies and combinations, to revoke the licences of such victuallers, and give the strictest orders to the high constables for apprehending all persons offending herein. Letters to the same purpose were likewise sent to Lord Cornwallis, Constable of the Tower, and to the Lord Mayor of London, who gave directions accordingly." The following day the Justices met and considered the matter, and resolved in reference thereto, "That if any journeyman should refuse to work for the wages settled by Act of Parliament, he should be committed to hard labour for two

months; and the master that paid more than the Act allowed, should forfeit £5.”¹ Hughson gives a similar account of the matter, adding that the action of the Lord Mayor and Common Council of the City of London, who in that year reduced Bartholomew Fair to three days only, and forbade any plays to be performed there, was partly due to the riotous assemblies of this combination of the tailors.² Nine months later we learn that this prompt action of the authorities bore fruit in a most practical manner. On Thursday, 13th June 1745, we are told that, “At the Sessions of the Peace for the City of London the Court suppressed the licences of five victuallers for presuming to harbour in their houses the journeymen tailors concerned in the combination for raising their wages, contrary to the Act of Parliament, and in defiance of the King’s proclamation, and several constables were fin’d for neglect in not impressing men into His Majesty’s service.”³

¹ *The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, vol. xiv. p. 505, 1744.

² “London, being an Accurate History and Description of the British Metropolis and its Neighbourhood to thirty Miles extent,” &c., by David Hughson, vol. i. pp. 392–3; London, 1805, 6 vols. 8vo. A similar account is given in “A New and Accurate History and Survey of London, Westminster, and Southwark, and Places adjacent,” &c., by the Rev. John Entick, vol. ii. p. 507; London 1766, 4 vols. 8vo. These are also supplemented by another writer, who, however, makes the mistake of adding, on what authority I am unable to discover, that “these resolutions were no sooner published than they produced the desired effect; the combination ceased, and the journeymen returned quietly to their respective employments.” See “The History and Antiquities of London, Westminster, Southwark, and Places adjacent,” &c., by Thomas Allen, vol. ii. p. 40; London, 1828, 4 vols. 8vo. As we shall see, this statement is entirely inaccurate.

³ *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, &c., vol. xv. p. 330, 1745.

Meanwhile, however, the journeymen had appealed, early in 1745, to the House of Commons for the redress of their numerous grievances. On Tuesday, 22nd January 1745, we are informed that "a great number of journeymen taylors attended at the House of Commons to deliver their cases to the several members, setting forth their hardships relating to wages, and humbly begging relief."¹ The case thus presented has been preserved² to us in the voluminous collection of documents made by Francis Place about a century later, and acquired by the British Museum. It is a moderate and well-written appeal, showing that the journeymen were generally receiving about tenpence per day more wages than the rate fixed by the Justices under the Act, and that the troubles now occurring in the trade arose from an attempt on the part of the employers, or some of them, to reduce the wages to the bare statutory sum. The men, in reply to the employers' attack, now made an effort to get the Act repealed, and appealed to the public for contributions and support towards that object. A week after the men had distributed their petition to the members, it was formally presented to the House of Commons and read. A long abstract of the case is entered in the Journals of the House, but the tearful pleading of the men was in vain. A motion made to refer the petition to the consideration of a Committee for examination and report was rejected, and the petition was merely ordered to lie upon the table of the House.³

Here, so far as Parliament was concerned, the whole

¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, &c., vol. xv. p. 51, 1745.

² Reprinted pp. 30-35.

³ Journals of the House of Commons, 1st February 1744 (1745), vol. xxiv. p. 733.

matter was allowed to drop. The employers were not aroused to defend themselves from the attacks contained in the case presented by their workmen, or, at any rate, if they were so aroused, they abandoned their efforts immediately upon the rejection of the men's petition. But although no further parliamentary action was taken, there is not wanting evidence that a good deal of public interest was created by the publication of the men's case, and that, for the first time, they received a share of public sympathy. This we gather from the appearance at this time of two letters, both dealing with the hardships and miseries endured by the journeymen tailors. Of one of these little more than a mention is necessary. The letter, which is a very lengthy one, appeared in the *Daily Advertiser*, and was reprinted and published as a broadside, probably by the journeymen themselves, as evidence of sympathy with their complaints. The author, who is anonymous, reflects at great length and in pompous style upon the injustice of enacting penal laws of any kind which do not equally affect every subject under like circumstances, and concludes: "I was led the other day into this sort of reflection, by a printed paper, accidentally put into my hands, call'd 'The Case of the Journeymen Taylors in and about the Cities of London and Westminster,' which appears to me to be conceived in such strong, tho' modest terms, as must irresistibly draw the attention of every judicious and impartial man, who has the preservation of that most happy constitution of government, which has subsisted so many ages in this island, at heart."¹

¹ From the *Daily Advertiser*, 16th January 1745. S. Sh. Fol.

The other pamphlet, which was published at about the same time, is one of the most interesting of all the documents, and a very large portion of it is now reprinted.¹ It is an extremely well-written and statesman-like appeal to a member of Parliament to take up the case of the journeymen tailors. The author was sufficiently interested to send for some of the journeymen and question them in regard to the customs and conditions of their trade and the grievances of which they complained. He speaks very highly of the modesty and courtesy of the men, and repeats much of what they said, including a long account of the origin of the curious "House of Call" system in the trade, which cannot fail to provoke interest, even though it may not command assent. Reference is also made to some prosecutions of journeymen tailors said to be then proceeding in the Court of King's Bench, but of which I have been unable to find any report. Finally, the copy of a tailor's bill is valuable as showing the class of work performed and the rank of those for whom it was done, and, together with the postscript suggesting that gentlemen should keep one or two tailors in their retinue, shows how completely that form of the industry, which was evidently not uncommon at the time of the Ipswich case,² had now disappeared.

For a few years after this movement of 1744-5 nothing further is heard of the combinations of the London tailors. Meanwhile, however, there is increasing evidence that the journeymen tailors in other towns were uniting themselves in trade organisations.

¹ Reprinted pp. 36-44.

² Quoted at footnote, *ante*, p. xxvi.

In September 1748 twenty-one tailors of Edinburgh were indicted for striking for an advance of wages. The action against them appears to have been taken by the Incorporation of Tailors in that town, and this is not the only instance in which we shall see these incorporations acting the part of employers' associations. The following account of the matter was given in the *Gentleman's Magazine*:—"September 1748, EDINBURGH.—At a late process before the baillie court, upon the instance of the incorporation of taylors of this city, against their journeymen of that craft, who refused to work without an augmentation of the current wages, twenty-one of them were ordained to be imprisoned in the Tolbooth for forty-eight hours, and thereafter till payment of £6, 6s. sterling, in the name of damages and as the expense of the process, and till they severally enact themselves not to be guilty of such practices in time coming, on pain of being confined to the house of correction for three months, and afterwards banished the city for ever. But next day they judged it proper to enact themselves in terms of the sentence; whereupon they were set at liberty."¹ This action resulted in the collapse of the journeymen's combination, and nothing more is heard of the Edinburgh tailors for nearly a century.

In July 1751 the London tailors secured an advance of wages from the Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace of the County of Middlesex. The order published by the Court, under the Act 7 Geo. I. c. 13, 1721, fixed the wages at 2s. 6d. per day from Lady-day to Michaelmas, and 2s. per day from Michaelmas to Lady-day, in addition to the usual allowance of

¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine, &c.*, vol. xviii. p. 427, 1748.

three-halfpence for breakfast. The hours of work, however, were not altered, and continued to be from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M., with one hour off for dinner. We are informed that "this order was very acceptable to the journeymen tailors, who returned their hearty acknowledgments in the public papers."¹ Two months later, however, the men are again dissatisfied, and refuse to work without a further advance of wages. It is alleged that during this agitation they committed many outrages, and sent threatening letters to many of the master tailors, who were again compelled to appeal to the King in Privy Council for assistance. On Wednesday, 16th September 1751, a number of the most substantial master tailors waited upon the Duke of Newcastle to complain of the refractory conduct of their journeymen. The same day an order was issued from the Privy Council censuring the tailors for refusing to work at the wages fixed by Quarter Sessions, and instructing the magistrates rigorously to enforce the laws against them. A reward of £50 was also offered for the discovery of persons sending threatening letters to the master tailors.² I do not know what success, if any, attended the publication of this order, but it seems clear that, notwithstanding its censure of the men, they had at this time a genuine grievance. Within ten days of the issue of the order the tailors within the city of London secured from the City Sessions at the Guildhall, after a hearing lasting several hours, a reduction of one hour a day off their working time. By the

¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, &c., vol. xxi. p. 329, 17th July 1751.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xxi. pp. 473-4, 1751. Hughson's "London" contains a similar account, vol. i. p. 425.

same decree the rate of wages for those in the City was raised to that fixed just before by the Middlesex Sessions for those working outside the City limits.¹

It seems probable that the chief grievance of the men at this time was the excessive length of their working day. This, it will be remembered, had been one of their chief complaints both in 1721 and in 1744; but until this time they had been unable to obtain any amendment of their condition in this respect, either by their combinations or through the operation of the law. The advance of wages and the reduction in working hours now obtained seem to have satisfied the journeymen in the City, and to have encouraged those of the other parts of the Metropolis to appeal again to the Middlesex Sessions for similar privileges.² But the masters were now thoroughly alarmed at the improvements the journeymen were securing through their continual agitations. They appear, therefore, to have spent the next few months in organising themselves with a view to

¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxi. pp. 473-4, 25th September 1751.

² This reveals one of the defects in the Act of 1721, which left the wages and hours of the tailors to be fixed by two separate authorities—one for the City, and one for the other parts of London. The advance of wages given by the Middlesex Sessions to the tailors outside the City radius in July of this year must have created great discontent among those within the City boundaries. Indeed, it is very probable that the whole of the outburst of agitation which immediately followed upon the decision of the Middlesex magistrates was due to the City workmen, who did not share the advantages which their neighbours had received. Now the positions were reversed, and the City journeymen, while getting their wages raised to the level of those outside, received also a reduction in their hours of work, and this led inevitably to further agitation amongst those outside the City limits.

securing some amendment in the law which would enable them to attack more effectually the men's combinations.

Early in January 1752 the masters presented to the House of Commons a petition setting forth their manifold grievances. They alleged that the existing law was insufficient for their protection, and prayed for its amendment. No copy of this petition appears to have been preserved, but a lengthy abstract of it is given in the House of Commons Journals.¹ The petition was read to the House, and immediately referred to a Committee for consideration and report. A Committee of forty-eight members, including the Lord Advocate of Scotland, and, in addition, all the members for Middlesex, Surrey, Essex, and London, was appointed, and ordered to meet the same day.² On the 28th January the journeymen presented a counter petition,³ praying that they might be heard by counsel before the Committee to whom the master tailors' case had been referred. This petition was also read to the House, and by them referred to the Committee, who were instructed to hear counsel upon both sides if the parties desired to be heard.⁴

On the 4th of March Sir Peter Warren delivered to the House of Commons the report of the Committee appointed to consider these petitions. The Committee had examined into the subject of the

¹ Reprinted pp. 45-48.

² Journals of the House of Commons, 17th January 1752, vol. xxvi. p. 377.

³ Reprinted pp. 49-56.

⁴ Journals of the House of Commons, 28th January 1752, vol. xxvi. p. 407.

petitions, and had heard several witnesses, as well as counsel on behalf of both the masters and the journeymen, and they had agreed to certain resolutions, which were also read to the House, but were unfortunately not entered upon the Journals. It was thereupon ordered that the report should be considered by the House upon the following Saturday.¹ According to this order, the report was brought forward on the Saturday, and then ordered to stand over until the following Monday.² But on Monday the House was again unable to consider the report, which was therefore adjourned to the following Thursday,³ and nothing more is heard of it. The whole affair seems to have disappeared entirely from the minds and interests of the House for some reason which I have failed to discover, and no further mention of it occurs. It is most likely that, as happened in subsequent years, the divergence of opinion among the employers themselves as to the best means of remedying their grievances caused them to abandon their agitation, and thus led to the collapse of the inquiry.

No result of any kind followed the failure of this effort of the masters to obtain further repressive legislation, and it is not until nearly a year later that we again hear of the journeymen tailors. On Friday, 2nd February 1753, they again applied to the Quarter Sessions of the City of London to alter their wages and hours of work. After a patient hearing it was ordered that they should work from 6 A.M. to 7 P.M., allowing one hour for dinner, and that from March

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 4th March 1752, vol. xxvi. p. 476.

² *Ibid.*, 7th March 1752, vol. xxvi. p. 482.

³ *Ibid.*, 9th March 1752, vol. xxvi. p. 485.

25th to June 24th they should be paid 2s. 6d. per day, and for the rest of the year 2s. per day, in addition to the three-halfpence allowed them for breakfast.¹ This order appears to have given satisfaction to both parties for some ten years, during which time peace and quietness reigned in the trade.

We next hear of the tailors in November 1763, when the journeymen again appealed to the Quarter Sessions at Guildhall for a revision of their wages. They were strenuously opposed by the masters, but eventually the Court ordered their wages to be increased to 2s. 2d. per day from Midsummer Day to Lady-Day, and 2s. 6d. per day for the other quarter of the year.² This order succeeded in maintaining peace for a short time only. Several years of almost constant trouble and disorder in the trade followed, and led in 1768 to a revision of the law. Strikes and riots seem to have been of frequent occurrence during these years, and so much was public attention attracted to these disputes that, in 1767, Foote produced at the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket a humorous play founded entirely upon these dissensions in the tailor-trade.³ The play is a farce written in tragic style, minutely describing a strike of the journeymen tailors. We are introduced to the meetings at their "Houses

¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, &c., vol. xxiii. p. 97, 1753.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii. p. 561, 1763.

³ "The Tailors ; a Tragedy for Warm Weather. In three Acts, as it is performed at the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket ;" London, 1778, 48 pp. 8vo. This is the earliest printed copy extant. The year of its production is given as 1767 by two authorities. See "London ; or, Interesting Memorials of its Rise, Progress, and present State," by Sholto and Reuben Percy, vol. iii. pp. 138-9; London, 1823, 3 vols. 12mo ; and *Notes and Queries*, 23rd January 1869, No. 56, p. 85.

of Call," and to those of the employers at the "Five Bells" tavern. There are riots and a pitched battle between the strikers and the non-strikers, whom we here first meet under the titles of "Flints" and "Dungs," terms still in use among the men to describe the unionists and non-unionists in the trade. Finally the men's leaders are arrested and imprisoned, and the whole dispute collapses in a victory for the employers. There is much in the play that is worth quoting, and there can be no doubt that it was written by one who knew a good deal of what was occurring in the trade. The cause of the strike is correctly stated, and there is other evidence that the taverns named as "Houses of Call" of the journeymen were all at that time so used. But the whole play appears too long and involved to be worth reprinting, and a few quotations must suffice. Thus at the men's meeting, the leaders addressing them are made to say:—

" . . . 'Tis well known to all
Some timid Dungs (unworthy of the name
Alike of tailor or of man ; from whom
Opprobrious proverbs rise to hurt our fame)
Meanly descend to work for half-a-crown."¹

And again:—

"The Dungs are numerous. . . .
It is well known, before these fatal broils,
The Flints and Dungs in friendly intercourse
Together worked, together friendly drank ;
Hence all are known, his name, his habitation,
His house of haunt and each particular."²

In the next scene, when the wife of one of the

¹ Act ii. scene 3.

² Act ii. scene 3.

leaders is imploring him to desist, lest he be sent to jail and she and her family starve, he replies—

“Each Friendly Box will yield a weekly aid.

What would you have me do?

If I comply,

The Flints will strait molest,

Nor wife nor child,

Nor e'en myself were safe.”¹

In the battle scene the “Dungs” are described as assembling in Lincoln’s Inn, while the “Flints” march down from “The Goose and Gridiron,” Paul’s Churchyard, “The Bell” in Doctor’s Commons, and “The Hog in Armour,” in Chick Lane, and a pitched battle between the two parties takes place in the Strand.²

However much of exaggeration and absurdity there may be in this play, there can be no doubt that the year 1767 was one of great trouble and tumult in the trade. On the 7th December in that year the masters once more applied to Parliament for assistance to cope with the risings of the journeymen. No copy of their petition is now to be found, but the abstract given in the House of Commons Journals probably conveys the gist of it.³ The petition, having been read to the House, was at once referred to a Committee for consideration and report. A Committee of thirty-six

¹ Act ii. scene 4.

² Act ii. scene 5. Two other of the men’s “Houses of Call” are named, “The Orange Tree,” in White Hart Yard, and the “Bedford Arms,” Bedfordbury. We shall see later that both of these houses were undoubtedly used as club-houses by the journeymen tailors at this time, and that the former was, as the play describes, their headquarters. The author of this play is unknown, and it is variously ascribed to Foote himself and to T. Wilkinson.

³ Reprinted p. 57.

members, and in addition all the members for the City of London and the counties of Middlesex, Surrey, Essex, Kent, and Hertford, was appointed and empowered to send for persons and papers, and ordered to meet the same afternoon.¹

It was not until the 22nd January 1768 that this Committee presented, through Sir Robert Ladbroke, its report to the House.² The report discloses yet another of the defects of the Act of 1721, and the means by which the employers had, in times of pressure of business, succeeded in evading the law. It will be remembered that the Act applied only to the districts within the "Weekly Bills of Mortality,"³ and in spite of frequent extensions of the area comprised in these Weekly Bills, the rapid growth of London left at all times some parts of the Metropolis outside their radius. Marylebone, St. Pancras, Paddington, Kensington, and Chelsea were not included in the Weekly Bills, and the result was that employers anxious to secure the best workmen, and to attract large numbers of them in times of pressure, removed their workshops to one of these growing suburbs. Here they could pay what wages and observe what hours they chose, and so secure the pick of the workmen. The other employers had apparently endeavoured to prevent these evasions of the law by prosecutions of the offenders, only to find, however, that the justices declined to convict them under the Act, which clearly did not apply to the localities chosen. The Com-

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 7th December 1767, vol. xxxi. p. 483.

² *Ibid.*, 22nd January 1768, vol. xxxi. p. 535.

³ See *ante*, footnote, p. xxi.

mittee, therefore, reported that the Act was insufficient to prevent such grievances, besides being ineffectual in other ways to answer the purposes for which it was intended.¹ Immediately upon the receipt of this report by the House, leave was at once given for a Bill to be brought in to amend the Act 7 Geo. I. c. 13, and Sir Robert Ladbroke and a Mr. Upton were ordered to prepare and bring in the said Bill.² No other entry relating to this Bill is to be found in the Journals of the House, but it was evidently hurried rapidly through all its stages. On 23rd February the Bill was taken by Sir Robert Ladbroke to the House of Lords, where it was immediately read a first time.³ The following day it was ordered to go before Committee of the whole House on the next day.⁴ On 25th February the House went into Committee upon the Bill, which was agreed to and read a second time,⁵ and the following day it was read a third time, and a message was sent to acquaint the Commons that the Bill was passed "without amendment."⁶ On 8th March 1768 it received the royal assent by commission.⁷

Thus in the short space of about six weeks the Bill passed through all its stages and became law. So quickly and so quietly was it done, indeed, that the

¹ See report, reprinted pp. 58-59.

² Journals of the House of Commons, 22nd January 1768, vol. xxxi. p. 535.

³ Journals of the House of Lords, 23rd February 1768, vol. xxxii. p. 97.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 24th February 1768, vol. xxxii. p. 102.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 25th February 1768, vol. xxxii. p. 106.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26th February 1768, vol. xxxii. pp. 108-9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 8th March 1768, vol. xxxii. p. 137. See the abstract of this Act printed at pp. 60-63.

journeyman appear to have been in entire ignorance of the matter, and it was not until some months later that they presented a petition against the Act to the House of Commons. But that body was in no mood to reopen a question which it considered closed, and the men's petition was merely ordered to lie upon the table of the House, and nothing more was heard of it.¹ I have been unable to discover any record of the petition here referred to, beyond the abstract entered in the House of Commons Journals.² The men appear to have reiterated their complaint of the hardships inflicted upon them by this special legislation. They complained again of their low wages and conditions of employment, and again expressed their objections to a system which gave to all the same rate of pay, regardless of differences in ability or energy.

For a few years after the enactment of this measure nothing more is heard of disputes in the trade in London. Nevertheless the Act does not appear to have been any more successful in fixing the rate of wages than the previous one had been. The more skilful of the men, if not, indeed, the whole body of them, soon commanded a higher rate of wages than the law allowed, and the only effect of the measure in this direction was to prevent the extra remuneration from being formally paid, and to compel both masters and men to resort to various subterfuges to evade the law. We learn from several sources that three shillings per day, or sixpence more than the statutory

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 18th May 1768, vol. xxxii.

p. 14.

² Reprinted pp. 64-65.

rate, soon became the usual wages of the trade, and one of the means by which the law was evaded is described in a pamphlet of this date. "The Justices at the Quarter Sessions within the Bills of Mortality," says the anonymous author of this pamphlet, "are empowered by law to settle the wages of journeymen taylors, which at present is fixed at 2s. 6d. a day, exclusive of their pint of beer; yet how many master taylors give some of their men 3s. per day. And the way that they evade the law is, that after they have paid the journeyman for his week's work, according to the order of Sessions, there is three shillings laid in some place where he knows where to find it; and if this money is not laid for him on the Saturday night, the master may be certain not to see his face on the Monday morning."¹ And we shall see later that this practice was the cause of considerable embarrassment to the employers, who, when they tried to obtain convictions against the journeymen for combinations, were threatened with proceedings for their own infringement of the law. Thus it would seem that the Acts of Parliament were equally ineffectual either to suppress the men's combinations or to prescribe the conditions under which they should work. The London clubs appear, indeed, to have been compelled to desist for a time from their aggressive trade action after the passing of this measure, just as they had after the enactment of the law of 1721. But this temporary quiescence did not mean, as we shall see, that they had ceased to exist.

¹ "A Letter to the Members in Parliament on the present State of the Coinage, &c.;" London, 1771, 8vo.

For the next few years, however, the scene of the activity of the combinations of tailors was shifted to other towns. Early in 1768 the tailors of Aberdeen came out on strike for an advance of wages and a reduction in their hours of labour. According to Bain,¹ the tailors in that town had already had many disputes with their employers in regard to hours and wages. As early as 1720 the rate of wages had been fixed at four shillings Scots (fourpence sterling) per day, and the working hours from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. In August 1734 those hours had been altered to six in the morning to ten at night, and had so continued for over thirty years. By the end of that period the wages had risen to eightpence per day, and the men, long discontented, now asked for a further advance to tenpence. The masters met in their Gild, and resolved that none of them should employ any man at more than eightpence per day, and that "any journeyman presuming to work for himself within the limits of the City should not be employed by any master until he had been brought to trial and punished therefor;" and, further, that any master employing men in opposition to these resolutions should pay a fine of ten pounds Scots to the Gild Boxmaster. This is the second occasion upon which we have seen a Gild thus acting as an employers' association, and it provides also a very early instance of the use of a "black list" by the masters. There is no evidence as to how the dispute ended.

In 1772 we hear again of the combination of the

¹ "Merchant and Craft Gilds : a History of the Aberdeen Incorporated Trades," by Ebenezer Bain, pp. 260-1 ; Aberdeen, 1887, 4to.

journeymen tailors of Dublin. Their trade Friendly Club of 1725-29, which has already been described, appears to have been repressed by the Anti-Combination Law of 1729. That Act had been revived and practically re-enacted in 1743,¹ but there is no evidence to show in either case that tailors were especially aimed at by the legislation. From 1743 to 1772 the Irish Parliaments were quite free from any further complaint of, or legislation against, combinations. Early in 1772, however, clubs among the artisans employed in several of the Dublin trades sprang into great activity, the first among them being the tailors. On February 18, 1772, the "Master Taylors and Stay-makers" of Dublin presented a petition to the Irish House of Commons complaining that their workmen were on strike, and refusing to work for the usual wages and hours.² No copy of this petition can now be found; but the abstract of it printed in the Journals of the House seems very complete.³ The petition was immediately referred to a Committee for consideration and report, and seven days later the Committee presented their report,⁴ stating that in their opinion the petitioners had fully proved the allegations of their petition.⁵ No motion was then made upon this report; but on March 18 in the same year leave was given for a Bill to be brought in

¹ 17 Geo. II. c. 8, 1743. The Statutes at large passed in the Parliaments held in Ireland.

² Journals of the House of Commons for the Kingdom of Ireland, 18th February 1772, vol. viii., Part i.

³ Reprinted pp. 66-67.

⁴ Reprinted p. 68.

⁵ Journals of the House of Commons (Ireland), 25th February 1772, vol. viii., Part i.

to regulate the journeymen tailors of Dublin.¹ Meanwhile the master shipwrights of Dublin had presented a petition, almost identical with that of the master tailors, in regard to their journeymen, and in consequence the Committee on the tailors' Bill was directed to insert a clause to regulate also the shipwrights of Dublin.² On March 24 the heads of the Bill were read and agreed to, and it was sent to the Lord Lieutenant for transmission to Great Britain in due course.³ It was returned from London, and was read a third time, and passed by the Commons of Ireland on May 18, and sent at once to the House of Lords for their concurrence.⁴ The Lords agreed to the Bill without amendment, and it was read a third time on June 4, and received the royal assent on June 7, 1772.⁵ Throughout the whole of the proceedings upon this measure no effort to oppose its enactment was made by the workmen in either of the trades concerned. Unlike their London brethren, the Dublin tailors do not appear to have been active in petitioning their Parliament upon their own behalf.

The Act thus passed by the Irish Parliament⁶ follows very closely the lines of the Act of 1768 for regulating the London tailors. The hours and wages are fixed, combination is forbidden, and severe punish-

¹ Journals of the House of Commons (Ireland), 18th March 1772, vol. viii., Part i.

² *Ibid.*, 20th March 1772, vol. viii., Part i. The master shipwrights presented their petition on 28th February 1772.

³ *Ibid.*, 24th March 1772, vol. viii., Part i.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 18th May 1772, vol. viii., Part i.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Appendix, vol. viii., Part ii.

⁶ Act 11 and 12 Geo. III. c. 33, 1771-2. The Statutes at Large passed in the Parliaments held in Ireland, vol. x. p. 323. See preamble and abstract, printed pp. 69-70.

ment is prescribed for any one letting the use of a room for the meetings of a tailors' club. Heavy penalties are also laid upon journeymen convicted of entering into oaths and covenants. I have been unable to discover any further evidence of the existence or continuance of the Dublin tailors' clubs than is provided by the enactment of this law. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suppose that the Irish Act was more successful in destroying the combinations of the Dublin tailors than the English Acts had been in London. It is possible that a diligent search through the files of old Dublin newspapers would reveal some further information upon this subject.

Our attention is now again turned to the London tailors, who early in 1772 renewed their agitation for improvements in their working conditions. On April 27, 1772, we learn that, "At the sessions of the peace for the City of London, the journeymen taylors preferred a petition to the magistrates, praying an augmentation of their wages, on account of the dearth of provisions, which petition was taken into consideration, and the prayer of it granted; and, at the same time, they received the applause of the court for the propriety of their behaviour, in seeking redress in a legal manner, without having recourse to violent methods, by which they could only hope to bring ruin upon themselves, and distress upon their employers; their wages were ordered to be advanced sixpence a day at ordinary times, and one shilling a day in times of general mourning."¹ This successful appeal of the men brought up the legal rate of wages to that which was already customary in the trade.

¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xlii. p. 241, 1772.

Peace was thereby restored, and for some six years no further movement took place among the London tailors.

The next we hear of combination among the journeymen of this trade is at Birmingham, where early in 1777 the tailors maintained a prolonged strike against an attempt on the part of their employers to introduce a system of piecework into the trade. Langford says¹ that this is the first trade dispute in Birmingham of which he knows. He reprints a number of advertisements which appeared in the contemporary local press, and which show the course of the dispute. The men endeavoured to gain their cause by starting a co-operative workshop and undertaking to supply clothes direct to their employers' customers. Incidentally, too, we learn that the "House of Call" was an old-established institution in the trade in that town as elsewhere.² But no information is given as to the result of the strike, though it seems probable that the men were not entirely successful.³

In the year following this interesting dispute in

¹ "A Century of Birmingham Life," &c., by John Alfred Langford, vol. i. p. 225, 2 vols. 8vo, 1868.

² See the advertisements, with Langford's notes, reprinted pp. 71-74.

³ Thirty years later piecework was a well-established and recognised method of payment in the trade in Birmingham. In the municipal library there are preserved two lists of prices, as follows: "A List of the Prices of Journeymen Tailors, April 2nd, 1806," and "A List of the Prices of Journeymen Tailors, May 22nd, 1807." There is no evidence to show by whom these lists were drawn up, and they are not in either case formally signed by employers or men. A note is added to both that "Jobbing"—*i.e.*, work not capable of classification in the list—is to be "paid 3½d. per hour."

Birmingham the London tailors once more claim our attention. On February 3, 1778, some of the master tailors of London presented a petition to the House of Commons praying that the two Acts of Parliament which compelled them to pay the same rate of wages to all their journeymen might be so amended as to remove this compulsion. They assert that experience had shown that this regulation was inconvenient in practice, and they charge it also with being the cause of the continued combinations in the trade, as the best and most diligent workmen were forced to combine in order to secure more wages than the law allowed.¹ I have been unable to discover any complete copy of this petition, but the abstract in the House of Commons Journals is lengthy and clear.²

The House of Commons, having heard the petition, immediately referred it to a Committee for examination and report. On February 23 the Committee reported, through Sir Herbert Mackworth, that they had examined the matter and heard several witnesses, who fully corroborated the complaints of the petitioners.³ Leave was thereupon at once given for a Bill to be brought in to amend the two previous Acts, and Sir Herbert Mackworth and Sir Charles Whitworth were ordered to prepare and bring in such a Bill.⁴ Five weeks later Sir Charles Whitworth presented to the House the Bill which had been drawn up to amend the laws regulating the journeymen

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 3rd February 1778, vol. xxxvi. p. 669.

² Reprinted pp. 75-76.

³ See report, reprinted pp. 77-78.

⁴ Journals of the House of Commons, 23rd February 1778, vol. xxxvi. p. 727.

tailors, and it was read a first time the same day.¹ So far no opposition of any kind appears to have been made to this proposed fresh legislation. The journey men, who had from the first opposed those provisions of the Act which were now being assailed by a section of the masters, were not likely to place any obstacles in the way of their repeal. But it would appear that the masters who had thus combined to attack the traditional position of their class in regard to this legislation were only a section, and the weakest section, of the employers; for on the 3rd April another petition of several master tailors was presented to the House of Commons protesting against the proposed amendment of the law, and praying to be heard by counsel against it.² The bewildered House ordered that the petition should lie upon the table, and that the petitioners should be heard by themselves or by counsel against the Bill if they thought fit.³ We are not officially informed whether these petitioners appeared before the House or not, but apparently they did so, and the result of their evidence was so conflicting that the House concluded it would be best to do nothing. At any rate nothing further is heard of the matter, and the Bill was not proceeded with. It is fair to assume, therefore, that while a portion of the employers had thus changed their views in regard to a legally fixed rate of wages, and had come to adopt the attitude assumed by the journeymen from 1721 onwards towards that pro-

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 30th March 1778, vol. xxxvi. p. 870.

² See abstract of petition, reprinted pp. 79-80.

³ Journals of the House of Commons, 3rd April 1778, vol. xxxvi. p. 881.

posal, the bulk of the employers were not yet so converted; and, further, the absence of any opposition from the side of the journeymen to the proposed new law seems to show that they had not abandoned their opposition to the principle of a fixed rate of wages for all alike.

For some years after this episode we hear but little of tailors' combinations in any part of the kingdom. There was, indeed, in 1783 a prosecution of seven journeymen tailors of Liverpool for combination, and it appears that the men had there conducted a strike for an advance of wages. But the information contained in the report of the case is very meagre.¹ Ten years later we meet with some evidence that even in the rural districts of England the tailors were now beginning to organise themselves. In June 1794 the following advertisement appeared in the *Nottingham Journal*:—"We, the tailors of the parishes of Greasley, Bulwell, Popplewick, Blidworth, Calverton, Oxtun, Woodborough, Farnsfield, Hucknell Torkard, &c., &c., desire that all such of the trade as think proper will attend at the house of Mr. Morris, the sign of the Three Crowns, Red Hill, on Tuesday the 24th day of June, at 10 o'clock in the morning, on particular business."² We do not now know exactly what was the "particular business" to be transacted at this meeting, but we shall probably not be far wrong in assuming that it was in some way connected with questions of wages and prices. The meeting appears to have been successful, for a few months later a somewhat similar

¹ See 1 Leach Reports, p. 274. Case reprinted pp. 81-85. It is also referred to by F. D. Longe in his "Inquiry into the Law of Strikes," p. 42.

² *Nottingham Journal*, 11th June 1794.

invitation appears in the same journal. It was signed, however, with the name of one who was probably the chairman or secretary of the association which had been formed, and it is noticeable that the invitation is now to all master and journeymen tailors, and it was as follows:—"This is to request all master tailors and journeymen in the neighbouring parishes within ten miles of Bolsover, to meet at Mrs. Hind's, known by the sign of the Anchor, in Bolsover, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday 20th of September, to consider of matters relative to the trade.—SAMUEL HUNT."¹ We have no further information about these meetings, nor is there any evidence that their consideration of matters "relative to the trade" resulted in any important action. It seems probable that the tailors of these villages, fired by the example of the stocking-frame knitters, who were at the time strongly organised, were intent on forming a society of their own for the protection of their trade interests.

In the spring of 1797 the journeymen tailors of Aberdeen are once more on strike for an advance of wages. We have already seen, in 1768, these unfortunate workmen goaded by excessive hours of work and low wages into a trade revolt, and the drastic steps taken by their employers to reduce them to submission. Much the same thing now occurred again. The Gild or Incorporation of Tailors of the town resolved not to concede any additional wages to their workmen, on the ground that their pay had been twice raised within a few years. They also instructed their Clerk to prosecute the delinquents for their unlawful combination. This was successfully

¹ *Nottingham Journal*, 8th September 1794.

done, and an entry in the minute-book of the Gild, dated the 5th July 1797, records that twelve of the journeymen had been tried and convicted of illegal combination, at the instance of the Deacon of the Gild, and with the consent of the Procurator-Fiscal. The prisoners had been fined the sum of ten shillings sterling each, and condemned to imprisonment in the Tolbooth for eight days. They were also ordered to find sureties that they would, immediately upon the expiration of their sentences, return to their former masters, and continue to serve them for seven shillings and sixpence per week, and not leave their service again without giving at least one month's notice of their intention to do so. Failing the payment of the fine and the production of these sureties, they were to be confined in jail until both those demands were complied with.¹ No further information about the conclusion of the strike is given, but it is probable that the men were again defeated, and that this harsh sentence succeeded in checking, at any rate for a time, their attempts at combination.

Two years later there appears to have been another prosecution of journeymen tailors for combination. In a list of all such prosecutions before 1800 which was drawn up and appended to the documents issued by the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Artisans and Machinery in 1824, mention is made of the case of "R. v. Marshall and others, journeymen tailors, 16th December 1799."² I have been, how-

¹ See the long account of this affair given in "Merchant and Craft Gilds," by Ebenezer Bain, pp. 261-2.

² "Minutes of Evidence before the Select Committee (of the House of Commons) on Artisans and Machinery, 1824," Appendix B., p. 521.

ever, unable to discover any report of the case, or indeed any other reference to it.

From the close of the eighteenth century we are in possession of what is practically a complete history of the London tailors' combinations until their destruction in the abortive strike of 1834. Francis Place, who began life as a journeyman leather-breeches maker, and afterwards became a master tailor, collected a large number of documents relating to the various movements in the trade during his own connection with it. By means of these documents, and of the numerous references to the trade in his autobiographical notes, and a few other sources of information, we are enabled to reconstruct the whole history of the London journeymen's unions during this period, and of the attempts of the employers to crush them. Of the provincial towns, however, our information is scarcely so complete. But the accounts we shall give of the tailors in several places may probably be taken as typical of the action and organisation of these journeymen in most of the larger towns, and we shall endeavour to show how widespread their organisation had become.

In the closing month of the old century the master tailors of London once more presented a petition to the House of Commons, describing their grievances.¹ This document sets forth that some five-and-twenty years earlier the men had applied to Quarter Sessions for an advance of wages, which had then been fixed at 18s. 9d. per week. From that time forth no appeal had been made to a legal tribunal, but the men had

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 22nd December 1800, vol. lv. p. 922.

by means of strikes and combinations advanced their wages to 25s. per week, and they were now again on strike for a further advance to 30s. per week. The employers had unanimously determined not to concede this further advance, and had resolved to prosecute the journeymen for conspiracy; but were met by counter threats from their men of prosecutions for paying more than the legal rate of wages. It is alleged that no fewer than 15,000 tailors in the Metropolis were now united in this combination, and the petitioners ask Parliament to pass an Act to indemnify them against any proceedings on account of their own illegal action in paying more wages than the law allowed.¹ This petition having been read to the House of Commons, it was simply ordered to lie upon the table of the House, and nothing further is heard of it. But the publicity thus given to the employers' complaints seems to have been sufficient to force the journeymen to endeavour to secure legal recognition of their claims. Early in 1801, therefore, the men, without abandoning their strike, appealed to the Quarter Sessions to advance their wages. We learn that on Monday, January 26, "The case of the journeymen taylors who have stood out so long for an increase of their wages from 25s. to 30s. a week, came on to be heard before Alderman Brook Watson (as *locum tenens* for the Lord Mayor), the Recorder, Sir William Anderson, and three other Aldermen.

"Mr. Gurney, on behalf of the journeymen, called several master-taylors, who stated, that in consequence of a general strike in 1795, the wages were raised to 25s. a week, which has been the general rate since;

¹ Abstract of petition, reprinted pp. 86-87.

but that, owing to the present pressure, that sum was not enough now.

“The Common Serjeant, on behalf of the masters, replied to the evidence without calling witnesses; but the court, conceiving the evidence incomplete, proceeded to examine three of the principal taylor on behalf of the masters, and three of the principal workmen on behalf of the journeymen. The masters all swore that they considered 25s. a week a fair, just, and reasonable allowance, considering all the circumstances of the times. They were also of opinion that the trade had increased since 1795, as also the number of workmen.

“The three workmen, on the contrary, deposed that they could not live in comfort and support their families decently under 30s. a week; they also gave a very satisfactory account of their houses of call, and their general system of proceeding. Every house of call had three books, on which the workmen were rated, according to the length of their residence in London; and those who were on the last or third book could not procure employment until all those on the preceding books were served. Each member paid 2d. a week at his particular house of call for this privilege, which sum went to create a fund for the support of the sick and infirm, and no others. Those who struck, and would not work under 30s., were called ‘Flints;’ they were also called the ‘Honourable Men,’ and would not work on the same board with those who should take less than 30s., and who were called ‘Dungs.’¹

¹ Compare this account of their organisations with that given in the *Gorgon* in 1818 by Francis Place, which is reprinted pp. 150–153.

"The court having consulted for some time, the Recorder proceeded to give judgment. He then ordered that the journeymen should be allowed 27s. a week, which is a rise of 2s., and double that sum, or 54s., in case of a general mourning."¹

The advance of wages thus secured brought the strike to a close, and appears to have contented the journeymen for some six years, during which no more is heard of their agitations. In 1805, however, an incident occurred which is worth recording. Mr. Dowton, at that time lessee of the Haymarket Theatre, announced as one of the pieces for his benefit night the revival of the farce "The Tailors: a Tragedy for Warm Weather," to which reference has already been made. The tailors of the Metropolis resented strongly what they thought an attack upon their dignity, and many threatening letters were sent to Dowton, some of which were signed by the secretaries of the tailors' clubs. He persisted, however, in his intention to produce the play, and the result was a serious riot, which had to be quelled by the police.² In 1807 the journeymen of London are once more on strike for an advance of their wages to 30s. per week. Very little information about this strike exists, but it was apparently not a long or serious affair, and it ended in a complete victory for the men, whose wages were generally advanced to the sum claimed.

The years 1810-11 witnessed the most determined attempt that had yet been made by the London

¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxi. p. 80, 1801.

² See "London; or, Interesting Memorials of its Rise, Progress, and Present State," by Sholto and Reuben Percy, vol. iii. pp. 138-9.

master tailors to stamp out the combinations of their workmen, an attempt which nothing but the energy and resource of Francis Place prevented from achieving success. Early in 1810 the employers formed an association for the defence of their trade interests. A strong Committee was appointed to organise the whole trade, and to devise means for attacking the men's organisation. On 1st August 1810 this Committee summoned, by public advertisement, a meeting of all the master tailors at the Highbury Tavern, where they presented their report and detailed the steps which they proposed should be taken. A copy of this voluminous and interesting report has been preserved by Francis Place.¹ It sets forth that the rise in the price of cloth and other necessities of the trade, combined with the further advance of 3s. per week in wages obtained by the men in 1807, had greatly diminished the profits of the trade, and compelled the employers to unite to seek a remedy for this loss. They complain that the men not only got more wages, but insisted upon taking more time to make each garment, and also that their regulations were very stringent, and enforced in all sorts of arbitrary and vexatious ways. If an employer failed to comply with these rules he was punished by being deprived of his workpeople for a month for the first offence, two months for the second offence, and compelled to retire from the business altogether if he was hardy enough to defy the men a third time, as the united "Houses of Call" then refused absolutely to allow him any supply of labour at all. Among the rules thus enforced by the men, it is interesting to note

¹ Reprinted pp. 88-95.

that one of the most drastic was that which strictly forbade men to take work home, and compelled the employers to provide workshops for their accommodation. The Committee's report refers to the failures of past attempts of the employers to resist the men's combinations, and ascribes these defeats to absence of proper organisation, adding "that a combination existing for nearly a century and ripened by experience, is not to be overturned by a sudden, irregular and ill-concerted attack." It concluded, therefore, by recommending the formation of a permanent association with regular subscriptions, and the establishment by the employers of a fund for providing old age pensions for such of their aged workmen as they thought deserving, hoping thus to succeed in detaching many of them from their own organisations. Finally, the Committee reports that a Bill has been drafted which they believe will give them relief from their burdens, and that they propose shortly to present it to the Legislature, together with a petition setting forth the grievances of the trade. The meeting appears to have been largely attended and highly successful. The report of the Committee was adopted, their work approved, and a permanent Committee elected to receive subscriptions and carry on the business of the association.

A fortnight later the Committee of the new Master Tailors' Association issued an appeal to the journey-men offering certain proposals for their consideration, and promising that if these were adopted they would do everything in their power to study the welfare and comfort of their workmen, and take immediate steps to establish a sick and old age pension fund for the

men's benefit.¹ These propositions, which demanded the removal of several of the most important of the trade regulations of the journeymen, were sent to eight of their "Houses of Call;" but the journeymen treated them with contempt, and a postscript to the document states that, an answer having been requested before the 17th October, the Committee met on that day to receive the replies, and found that none were forthcoming. They therefore appealed for increased subscriptions and help, with a view to a more vigorous attack being made upon the men. The response to this appeal was prompt and effective, and the Committee was thereby encouraged to further action. On 31st January 1811 a petition "of several master taylors in the city of London and within five miles thereof" was presented to the House of Commons and read. It recited the two Acts in force for regulating the journeymen tailors, and complained that some of the provisions of those Acts had been found inadequate for the purposes intended, and therefore prayed that leave might be given to bring in a Bill to amend the said Acts accordingly.² This petition was at once referred to a Committee, of which Sir James Shaw and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre were the most prominent members, and which was ordered to meet the next day.³ On 1st March 1811 Sir James Shaw reported from this Committee that they had examined into the matter of the petition, and it is evident that

¹ See the document reprinted pp. 96-98.

² No copy of this petition has been preserved, and the abstract in the House of Commons Journals is very brief, and is practically reproduced here.

³ Journals of the House of Commons, 31st January 1811, vol. lxvi. p. 56.

the Committee were impressed in favour of its prayer. The report was read, but not entered upon the Journals, and leave was at once given for a Bill to be brought in to amend the Act of Geo. III. for regulating the tailors of London, and it was ordered that "Sir James Shaw, Mr. Alderman Combe, Sir William Curtis, and Sir Charles Price do prepare and bring in the said Bill."¹ Three days later the Bill was brought in by Sir James Shaw and read a first time, and the date for the second reading fixed.²

No further progress was made with the Bill for some time, the second reading meeting with several adjournments. Meanwhile, on 4th April 1811 the Master Tailors' Committee issued a voluminous address to the trade at large.³ In this document they reiterated their complaints of the evils to which they were subjected by the combination of their workmen; they again detailed the various restrictions and regulations which the men had enacted, and the methods by which they were forced upon the unwilling employers; and, finally, they explained once more the various steps they had taken to avoid contention in the trade, and the overtures they had made to the men with that object. These devices having failed, they had then appealed to the Quarter Sessions to fix the rate of their workmen's wages. The case had been heard, and an order issued by the Justices, which, however, the men had treated with the same contempt that they had shown for all the other proposals. All

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 1st March 1811, vol. lxvi. p. 132.

² *Ibid.*, 4th March 1811, vol. lxvi. p. 141.

³ Reprinted pp. 99-107.

other steps having thus proved abortive, the Committee had now appealed to the Legislature for assistance, and had submitted a Bill which they considered well calculated to restore the relations of the employers and their workmen to a proper condition. For all these steps, and especially for the measure now before the House of Commons, the Committee solicited the full support and assistance of the general body of employers, and they concluded their lengthy address by again urging the necessity for the immediate establishment of a fund to relieve the deserving workmen in times of affliction and distress.

Up to this period of their proceedings all the employers appear to have been in complete agreement with the action of this Committee. But at this stage an opposition party, which, as we shall see, was carefully marshalled and voiced by Francis Place, arose among them, and an outcry was raised against this fresh attempt to prescribe by legislation the conditions of employment in the trade. On 24th April 1811 two petitions were presented to the House of Commons against the Bill for regulating the journeymen tailors which was then under consideration. The first of these was from "several master tailors residing in the city of London, or within a few miles thereof;" and the other was a petition of several journeymen tailors. In both cases the petitioners prayed that they might be heard either by themselves or counsel against the Bill. The two petitions were immediately referred to the Committee on the Bill, and it was ordered that the petitioners should be heard by themselves, their counsel, or agents if they thought fit, and also that counsel in favour of the Bill should be admitted.

The Committee was also made an open one, it being ordered "that all who come to the Committee shall have voices."¹ Of the two petitions thus referred to, only that of the master tailors has been preserved.² It is an able and temperately written document, professing to emanate from the wealthy employers who make the best work. They assert that the Bill before the House has been drawn up solely by the small employers and those making the common work; that the workmen who make the best work always have been, and must be, paid a higher rate of wages than the others; and that it is, therefore, unjust and absurd to attempt to fix one scale of pay for men of all degrees of skill and ability. The whole case in favour of free and unfettered competition, as opposed to legislative interference with the conditions of employment, is stated with great ability and lucidity, and the petition ends by urging that all restrictive legislation, whether of the men's combinations or of their working conditions, should be speedily removed.³ A few weeks later this petition was followed by a lengthy pamphlet setting forth in more detail the arguments against restrictive legislation, and further urging the repeal of the existing laws.⁴

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 24th April 1811, vol. lxvi. pp. 262-3.

² Reprinted pp. 108-114.

³ This petition bears throughout the impress of the style and arguments of Francis Place, by whom it was probably written. Notice especially the argument at pp. 111-113, that the men's combination would quickly disappear if the laws regulating the trade were repealed, and compare the similar argument used by Place in his letter to Sir F. Burdett, quoted at pp. 97, 98, of the "History of Trade Unionism," by Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

⁴ Reprinted pp. 115-121. This pamphlet is avowedly the work of Francis Place.

This fierce onslaught from a section of the employers themselves upon the position adopted by the body of the trade appears to have plunged the House of Commons Committee on the Tailors' Bill into the direst perplexity. They continued their inquiry for a whole month after this date, obtaining an extension of the time for the presentation of their report on no fewer than five separate occasions.¹ Finally they seem to have abandoned the whole matter in disgust, for no report of any kind was presented, and the whole matter was allowed for the time to drop quietly out of existence by the Committee ceasing to meet.

The truce thus secured through the careful wire-pulling of Francis Place proved of very brief duration. The defeated body of employers did not abandon their efforts to secure further repressive legislation, and they soon found a friendly member willing to voice their complaints. On 12th June 1811 Mr. Lockhart, M.P., gave notice of his intention to call the attention of the House at an early date to the need of some regulation of the London tailors. He gave a brief history of combination in the tailors' trade, and added that at the present time, "out of 24,000 tailors" in the Metropolis, "4000 had been proved to be in a regular combination, provided not only with Council but with a fund of money. They were not content with aiding their own combination, but even combinations of other trades, particularly the calico weavers;" and he concluded "by moving for the appointment of a Select Committee to take into consideration the regulation of the wages of the tailors'

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 29th April; 3rd, 9th, 14th, and 20th May 1811; vol. lxvi., pp. 278, 296, 314, 327, and 347.

trade.”¹ This proposal was favourably received by the House, and it was at once ordered “that a Select Committee be appointed to take into consideration the laws regulating the wages of journeymen in the tailors’ trade within the Bills of Mortality, the state of the said trade generally, the combinations entered into by the journeymen therein, and the effects thereof on other branches of industry.” A Committee of twenty members, including Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. Peter Moore, and in addition all the members for the counties of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Berks, Bucks, Oxford, and Bedford, was appointed, and ordered to meet the next day, and to have the usual power to send for persons, papers, and records. Five members were to form a quorum, and the Committee was given leave to continue its sittings notwithstanding any adjournment of the House.² The Committee thus appointed appears to have been presided over by a Mr. Barton, who had been a Welsh judge, and to have met a great many times. No notices of its meetings are to be discovered in the Journals of the House, but we soon find evidence that Place set to work with indefatigable energy to oppose the efforts of the employers. His first step was to discover a friendly member of the Committee, to whom he sent a lengthy letter of suggestions as to the points upon which to examine hostile witnesses. This document gives us a good idea of the nature of the proposals made by the employers to the Committee, and admirably reveals the

¹ Newspaper report, 13th June 1811. Cutting preserved in the Place MSS., Brit. Mus., vol. xxvii. 799 (1). The title of the newspaper from which it was taken is not preserved, but it was probably the *Morning Advertiser*.

² Journals of the House of Commons, 12th June 1811, vol. lxvi. p. 421.

weakness of their case. It concludes with a letter written by Place, the day after his examination before the Committee, to the same friendly member, giving further details of the points upon which he was not himself examined. Some twenty years later Place wrote a "Narrative of the Proceedings for the Repeal of the Combination Laws," which is still preserved in the original manuscript in the British Museum, and from which I have extracted his account of the proceedings of the master tailors in 1810-11, and of his own share in their discomfiture.¹ So effective was his evidence and his management of the opposition to the proposed legislation, that the Select Committee, like its predecessor, was too perplexed to come to any conclusion. No report was presented by it, and the whole matter was again allowed to pass quietly out of mind, the Committee never being formally dissolved.²

We are thus brought to the end of this long period of legislative regulation of the conditions of the London tailors' industrial life. The Acts of Parliament already existing were not, indeed, immediately repealed, and they were not finally erased from the statute book until 1875. But from this time forth no attempt to secure further legislation appears to have been made by either party, and the existing laws were rendered practically inoperative by the absence of any effort to enforce their provisions. Both parties, in fact, following the general trend of opinion

¹ The letter and suggestions are reprinted pp. 122-128. The extract from the "Narrative," &c., is reprinted pp. 129-131. The friendly member to whom the letter was written is not named, but was probably Sir Francis Burdett.

² Journals of the House of Commons. Index to years 1801-1820, vols. lvi.-lxxv. p. 364, states that the Select Committee on Tailors, 1811, issued no report.

in the country, seem now to have embraced the idea of freedom of contract, restricted only by the existence of voluntary combinations on one or both sides. We shall see that for over twenty years from this date the journeymen succeeded in maintaining intact that control over the conditions of their working life which a century of combination had enabled them to secure.

It is somewhat singular to discover that, although for almost a hundred years the journeymen tailors of London had now been organised in their numerous trade clubs, no copy of the rules of any of these organisations up to this period appears to have been preserved. There can be no doubt that such documents had existed for many years before this date, but they were most likely kept in concealment owing to the fear of prosecution which continually beset the men. But in 1812 the tailors' club which met at the "Scotch Arms" in Bedfordbury, off St. Martin's Lane, a "House of Call" to which we have already found reference as early as 1768, revised and reprinted its rules, and a copy of these has been preserved.¹ This document sets forth that the Society was established in 1760, and it opens with the elaborate and interesting preamble often met with in such old books. The rules consist of an elaborate code of eighteen articles, together with the usual forms of declaration on and off the various benefits of the Society, which were probably copied from those model forms to be found in the rules of various friendly societies at this time. The meetings of the Society were held every six

¹ Reprinted pp. 132-145. See the reference to this club at *ante*, p. xlii. n.

weeks. The entrance fee was 5s. 8d., and the contribution 3s. 6d. every half-quarter—"that is to say, $\frac{3}{4}$ to the stock and 2d. to be spent for the benefit of the house." The benefits provided were sick pay of 16s. per week for fifty-two weeks in two years; superannuation of 2s. 6d. per week for life; and a funeral benefit of £13, which could be drawn in one sum at a member's death, or of which £4 could be drawn at the death of a member's wife, and the remaining £9 at his own decease. The rules contain many provisions still to be found in the constitutions of most trade unions and friendly societies, such as those forbidding sick pay to members who bring disease upon themselves, and fixing the hours during which members in receipt of sick benefit may be allowed out of their homes; together with one valuable provision, not yet inserted in the rules of all such societies, "that the disagreeable necessity of shutting up the box may be avoided, and which happens when many members are sick at one time," the funds of the Society are never to be allowed to fall below £500 in the Three Per Cent. Consols.

These rules may probably be taken as a fair specimen of those in force in the other London tailors' clubs existing at that time. They contain, it will be observed, absolutely no mention of trade purposes or regulations, and there is not even any provision for the relief of unemployed members. One curious provision, however, exists, which is obviously a survival from an older set of rules. Rule 12 provides that members "impressed into His Majesty's sea or land forces" may retain their membership and claim the benefits of the Society upon their return to the trade;

but by the same rule members joining the army or navy of their own choice are to be immediately excluded from the Society. This special provision for the victims of impressment is probably a remnant from the time when, as we have seen, the men's leaders were subject to that cruel form of punishment for their activity in the affairs of the trade. We are compelled to notice, too, the complete absence from these rules of any provision for federal or joint action of any kind with the numerous other tailors' clubs in London. That such joint action, in trade affairs, had long been taken by the men is beyond doubt, and the absence of any rules dealing either with this matter or the general trade regulations of the men suggests that the trade union side of the organisation was kept separate and distinct from the friendly society.¹ We are, however, quite unable now to form any idea of the lines upon which the trade organisation and federal relations of that day were based. It is probable that the federation was of a very informal character, and it may even have amounted to little more than a tacit agreement among the clubs to assist each other in times of need.

We arrive now at what is one of the most important and most interesting of all the documents we have seen. In 1818-19 Francis Place, who had then already begun his campaign against the anti-

¹ This was by no means an uncommon form of early trade organisation. There are many cases, such as those of the Liverpool coopers and the London sailmakers, in which, in the early part of this century, two societies closely related to each other existed, the one a strictly trade society, the other a society providing various friendly benefits. Membership of the latter was rigidly confined to those who were also members of the former.

combination laws, secured the aid of a small weekly newspaper entitled *The Gorgon*, which was conducted by one John Wade. To this little periodical Place contributed many articles, of which a lengthy description of the London tailors and their clubs is exceedingly valuable,¹ both from the quantity of information it contains and from the fact that, coming as it does from Place, himself a master and formerly a journeyman tailor, the information is entirely trustworthy. This article, or rather series of articles, for it ran through three of the weekly issues of the paper, supplements in many ways the information we have derived from other sources. Its description of the men's clubs is well borne out by that furnished to the Quarter Sessions by the men in 1801, and previously quoted;² while the table of all the changes in the wages of tailors since 1777, and the alterations in the price of bread during the same period, is exceedingly valuable. This, indeed, supplies the key, as Place recognised, to much of the agitation of the men, who found that during the years 1794-1814 their standard of comfort was being continually encroached upon by the steadily rising prices of commodities. The extraordinary activity and strength of their combinations during these years suggest, indeed, that possibly a similar table of the course of wages and prices during the years immediately preceding 1720 might reveal the principal cause of the first rise of trade combinations among this body of men at that period.

The system of combination here described by Place is one with which the course of this study has made us familiar. The numerous "Houses of Call," with their

¹ Reprinted pp. 146-160.

² See *ante*, p. lix.

rigid regulation of the "turns" of work; the rules and subscriptions of a friendly club for the relief of the sick and the burial of the dead, supplemented by a small separate weekly contribution for the maintenance of the trade organisation and a heavy levy on those in work to provide relief for the unemployed. We have here, too, the first description of the constitution of the Central or Federal Council. One delegate from each of the clubs, selected by the tacit assent and unknown even by name to the majority of the members whom he represented, met together and formed this all-powerful central committee. This elaborate system was well devised to secure that secrecy which was so essential at a time when severe punishment awaited any of the leaders who might be discovered. It illustrates admirably, too, the effect which drastic repressive legislation has always had upon such organisations as these. Of the trade regulations of these organisations, which are here described in considerable detail by Place, we can only say that they do not appear to differ widely from those still enforced by various Trade Unions. They are, indeed, very similar to those which the Tailors' Unions to-day endeavour to enforce, though it appears that in 1818 the "Flints," in contrast with the "Dungs," still refused to work by the piece—a method of remuneration which is now almost generally accepted throughout the trade.

We cannot help regretting that Place did not give us some account of the origin of the separate organisation of the two classes of "Flints" and "Dungs" in the trade. But in the absence of any such account two suggestions may be offered. It is possible that

at first the tailors' clubs strictly confined their membership to those who had served a legal apprenticeship to the trade, and thus compelled the "Colts," or illegal men, to form separate organisations. There are many instances of this kind of occurrence in the history of the unions of such old handicraftsmen as the brushmakers, the sailmakers, and others, and there seems no reason why the tailors should not have met with the same difficulties. On the other hand, it may be, as Place seems to suggest, that the "Dungs" were simply the inferior workmen, who were unable to secure similar conditions to those insisted upon by the "Flints," and had accepted work during times of strike, and were therefore excluded by the "Flints" from membership in their societies. But whatever may have been the origin of this dual system of organisation, it is clear that the antagonism between the two sections was now rapidly breaking down, and that they were making common cause in all their disputes with the employers.

In the same year that these articles were appearing in *The Gorgon*, we have preserved to us copies of the half-yearly reports and balance sheets of one of these clubs. It is described as "The Old George Associated Taylors' Benefit Society," held at "The Pewter Platter, Charles Street, Hatton Garden," which was probably the one from which Place obtained his information, as the documents are preserved in his collection. Portions of these reports are here reprinted,¹ and from them we learn that the club consisted at this time of two divisions, the first containing 322 members, and the second 277. This was

¹ Reprinted pp. 161-163.

most likely an arrangement made merely for convenience, 600 members having been found more than could easily meet on one night, and possibly more than could be managed by one clerk or secretary at an annual salary of £7, 17s. 6d. The benefits provided by this club were sick pay, superannuation, and funeral, and in each case the amounts were the same as those given by the club at the "Scotch Arms," whose rules are reprinted here. There was also a very heavy half-yearly expenditure for beer, which was no doubt the result of the expenditure of twopence per member "for the good of the house," and which was consumed at the general meetings of the members. The receipts from contributions amounted to about £480 per half-year, and the balance in hand at this time amounted to no less than £1750. In 1819 the two divisions were amalgamated for some reason, and the clerk's salary is consequently doubled. In these accounts, also, we find an entire absence of any reference to or expenditure upon trade affairs, which were evidently kept quite apart from the friendly society side of the club. For a few years after this we hear no more of the London tailors' clubs which did not actively interest themselves in Place's efforts to secure the repeal of the combination laws.

In 1823 the tailors of Edinburgh were out on strike, as appears from the meagre information before us, for some improvement in their list of piecework prices. Here also the tailors are said to have been organised in benefit clubs, based upon a "House of Call" system, which was an ancient institution, and the men's advertisement is dated from one of these taverns.¹ We

¹ Reprinted pp. 164-166. The existence of the "House of Call" system among the tailors in Edinburgh long before this time seems

are not, however, informed of the termination of this strike, or which party achieved success in it.

In the following year we hear again of the London tailors. In June 1824 one of their numerous clubs made an attempt to form a federation of all the clubs for the purpose of raising a general fund for the support of aged and decayed members. We have already seen the great drain on the funds of one of these clubs which the provision of superannuation benefit entailed.¹ Some of the others do not appear to have provided this benefit, and it was partly to the desire of all the men to share the same advantages, and partly from the anxiety of those who already subscribed for superannuation to see its supporters increased, that this attempt was made. The Society which now took action drew up a set of rules for the formation and administration of a general fund to meet these needs. These rules, a copy of which has been preserved,² are of great interest. They provide that membership of the proposed fund should be confined to those "who had belonged to the honourable part of the trade" (*i.e.*, the "Flints") "for at least ten years."

indisputable. In that very amusing autobiography, "The Life of Mansie Waugh, Tailor in Dalkeith," we are told that the author, as soon as he had finished his apprenticeship in Dalkeith, went to Edinburgh, as was the custom of the trade, to get a job as a journeyman there, and to improve his workmanship by working for the fashionable folk of that city. He succeeded in getting a not very good place, but adds that when he remembered "how many have been out of bread month after month, making vain applications at the House of Call," he was very grateful for having got something to do. See "The Life of Mansie Waugh, &c., written by Himself" (D. M. Moir), pp. 43, 44; Edinburgh and London, 1828.

¹ See the Reports of the Old George Associated Taylors' Benefit Society, reprinted pp. 161-163.

² Reprinted pp. 167-170.

The funds were to be raised by a levy on all the clubs uniting to form the scheme, and the benefits were to be given to aged members elected from and by the clubs in rotation. The scheme appears to have been an attempt to add a permanent superannuation benefit to the Trade Union organisation, but it was apparently not received with general favour, and does not seem to have been adopted generally.

The same year that saw this attempt to link the tailors' clubs in London together in a general federation saw also the appointment, largely through the influence of Francis Place, of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Artisans and Machinery. Place himself gave voluminous evidence before this Committee, in which, among other things, he repeated the facts stated in his articles in *The Gorgon*.¹ It is somewhat significant, however, that of all the organised trades the journeymen tailors were the least disposed to make any efforts towards the repeal of the anti-combination laws. Their lethargy in this matter chagrined Place, who had done much for them in the past, and he very justly complained of it in later years.²

In 1825 the tailors of Birmingham were again engaged in a bitter dispute with their employers, in reference to an amended list of prices for their work. Advertisements and counter-advertisements³ of the

¹ See his evidence, contained in the "First Report of the Select Committee on Artisans and Machinery, 1824," pp. 44, 45.

² See the "Narrative of Proceedings for Repeal of the Combination Laws," a portion of which is reprinted pp. 129-131. Only one of the tailors' clubs took any step at all, and it merely allowed its officers to sign one of the ordinary petitions which Place had drawn up against the laws.

³ Reprinted pp. 171-174.

disputants were inserted in the Birmingham newspapers for many weeks; but the affair ceased suddenly, and we do not now know how it concluded. Three years later, in the spring of 1828, the Sheffield tailors were out on strike for an advance of wages and the abolition of a custom prevailing in that town of stoppages of pay for spoiled work. The strike, of which very little information can be discovered, did not last long, and the men appear to have been successful in their demands.¹

In the years 1831-32 the organised workmen in every trade throughout the kingdom took an active part in the agitation for political reforms which distinguished those years. Many great demonstrations in favour of the Reform Bill were organised and successfully carried out entirely by the workmen themselves. The tailors were not behind their fellow-craftsmen in this movement, and in almost every town of importance throughout the kingdom their clubs seem to have played a prominent part in the agitation. The London and Dublin clubs were still in vigorous existence, and entered actively into the movement; while those of Ashton-under-Lyne and Leicester were liberal contributors to the funds of the National Association which conducted the Reform movement.² Similar clubs of tailors in Birmingham, Sheffield, Brighton, Rochester, Greenock, and other towns are all mentioned in the pages of the working-class newspapers of the day as giving active support to this movement.³ After the passing of the

¹ See *The Sheffield Iris*, 1828.

² See "On Combinations of Trades," Anonymous, pp. 12, 13, 83-94; London, 1831, 8vo.

³ See *The Poor Man's Guardian*, 1831-4; *The Crisis*, 1831-5; *The Pioneer*, 1833-4; and *The Man*, 1834, all in the British Museum.

Reform Act in 1832 further demonstrations of joy at the victory were held in most of the large towns throughout the kingdom, in which again the various trade societies were very prominent. In Scotland especially there seems to have been a very great display of public rejoicing over this event on the part of the trade organisations. A large collection of documents relating to these demonstrations in Edinburgh and Leith is preserved in the British Museum. I have reprinted portions of one showing that both the old Incorporations of Tailors which still existed in Scotland and the journeymen's trade clubs took an active part in these parades.¹ And, again, in the General Election which soon followed immediately upon the passage of the Reform Act the success of the popular candidates was made the occasion for trades demonstrations, especially in Scotland, in which the tailors were again vigorously in evidence.²

Between the years 1818-19, when we saw the London tailors' clubs in active and vigorous control of the trade, and the period at which we have now arrived, a rapid process of decay and disintegration appears to have set in among them. After an existence of over a hundred years, during the greater part of which they exercised a controlling influence over the conditions of their industrial life, they were now

¹ Reprinted pp. 175-178.

² See "Chairing of the Lord Advocate and the Honourable Mr. Abercromby," S. Sh. Fol., Edinburgh, 1832; also "The Chairing of the City Members," S. Sh. Fol., Edinburgh, 1832; and the whole of the collection of these documents contained in this volume. They mention, among other trades taking part in the processions, "The St. Andrews Society of Tailors" and "Incorporation of Easter and Wester Portsburgh Tailors."

finally broken up and disbanded by the collapse of the great strike of 1834. It is impossible now to understand clearly what were the causes to which their weakness and defeat must be attributed. It was partly no doubt due to the decay and disappearance of the "House of Call" system of conducting the industry, which had always necessitated a vigorous organisation of the men in order to secure a fair sharing of the work among them; and perhaps even more largely to the introduction and rapid increase, about this time, of the production of cheap "slop clothing," with its consequences of women's labour and home work. But to whatever cause we may attribute their fall, it is certain that already in 1830 the London clubs no longer exercised that complete control over the trade which they had formerly enjoyed. Only the production of the best class of "bespoke" goods in the large West End shops seems to have been still carried on subject to their regulations. With this diminution of their power the clubs seem to have largely abandoned their active trade policy, and to have shrivelled up into little more than trade friendly societies.

Early in 1833, under the inspiration of Robert Owen, the London tailors had allied themselves actively with schemes of co-operative production and exchange. Weekly meetings of delegates from all the organised and interested trades were held at Owen's Institution in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, at which reports were given of the progress of the movement.¹ In September 1833, at one of these weekly meetings, we find the tailors' delegates report-

¹ See the reports of these meetings in *The Crisis*, 1833-34.

ing that their workshops were a success, the receipts from July 17 to August 28 having been £143, and their expenditure £133, and they had recently opened a new branch in the City for the convenience of those residing there.¹ Early in October the Congress of delegates from Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies was held, and after a most inspiring address from Robert Owen, decided to form the "National and Moral Union of the Productive and Useful Classes," a movement in which the London tailors' delegates took a prominent part.² In the following week there appeared in *The Man* a long leader dwelling upon the lengthy periods of unemployment to which tailors were subject, and urging as a remedy the immediate shortening of their daily hours of labour;³ and three weeks later a further leader appeared in the same journal urging the immediate formation of a "Grand National Union" of the tailors' trade, with lodges in every parish in the kingdom. It was suggested that these lodges should be governed by district councils and these in turn by a Grand National Council, and that the objects of the Union should be to strangle the present ruinous competition in the trade, to raise wages, and to shorten the hours of labour.⁴

The ideal thus held out before the men, and the appeals to their public spirit to redress the grievances under which they laboured, were not ineffectual. A few days before the appearance of the second of these articles, a meeting of the men was held at the "Black

¹ *The Crisis*, 14th September 1833.

² *The Man*, 12th October 1833.

³ *Ibid.*, 20th October 1833. Leader signed "Agrarius."

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10th November 1833. Leader by "Agrarius."

Horse" in Rathbone Place to consider the condition of the trade. At this meeting a Committee was appointed to consider and report on the steps best calculated to improve the position of the body of the workmen. This Committee held several meetings, and having drawn up a report, called a general meeting of the whole trade by public advertisement. The meeting was held at the Circus in Great Windmill Street on 18th November, and it was very largely attended. The report of the Committee was read and unanimously adopted, and resolutions were passed in favour of the immediate formation of a great Union of the trade, to be afterwards united with all other trades, and so form a grand national Union of the whole working class.¹ The report and resolutions are full of that bombastic sentimentalism which was the bane of all the working-class movements of the time, and which was due to the influence which Robert Owen, with his huge schemes, had secured over the minds of the men's leaders. At this meeting the first Lodge of the Grand National Union of Tailors was formed, as we are told with much rhetorical flourish, though, as the subscription was fixed at only one penny per week, the Union can scarcely be said to have started with a sound financial basis.² Without waiting to perfect their organisation, or to amass a fund to meet possible contingencies, a second great meeting of the trade was called early in December. At this mass meeting, after much complaint of the overwork of some and the unemployment of others, it was unanimously agreed to make a simul-

¹ See the report, reprinted pp. 179-182.

² *The Man*, 1st December 1833.

taneous demand upon all the London employers early in the new year for a reduction of the hours of labour to eight per day, and an advance of wages to ninepence per hour, to come into operation on 1st March 1834. It was at this meeting that Robert Owen was refused a hearing by the great body of the workmen, on the ground that he was "so wound up with plans and projects" that there was nothing practicable about him.¹ It seems to us now a great pity that the men's leaders did not profit by the sturdy common sense of their followers, and refuse to be drawn into Owen's high-sounding schemes, to their own ruin and the complete and disastrous wreck of all their hopes.

We hear nothing more of this new Union of the tailors for a few months, but apparently wiser counsels for a time prevailed, and the demands for improved working conditions were not made so soon as was expected. Meanwhile the Union had allied itself with the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, that ill-organised body of workers of all kinds and both sexes which for a whole year struck terror and dismay into the minds of the rulers of the nation and the leader-writers of the *Times*. The tailors appear to have taken an active part in this organisation, and their chief secretary—one J. Browne—was also a co-secretary of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union.² Suddenly, and without warning of any kind,

¹ *The Man*, 8th December 1833.

² The chief secretary of this Federation was one E. C. Douglas, apparently a pseudonym for some person who is not now known. But some of the circulars of the Executive Council were signed by J. Browne as secretary. See, for instance, the circular in *The Crisis*, 19th April 1834.

the Tailors' Union took steps to obtain the recognition of their demands. On 25th April 1834 a circular was issued to all the London master tailors demanding an advance of wages and a reduction of working hours, to take place on the following Monday, and threatening a general strike and the opening of co-operative workshops if these demands were not conceded.¹ The suddenness and secrecy with which this step was taken created intense surprise in the ranks of the Unions, and to the conductors of their press. The leader in *The Crisis* the following week declared that "we had never heard of it until the resolution was passed," and that had the news come earlier the tailors would have been urged to put off their movement and wait for the great general strike of all trades then being actively advocated.² It appears that one of the reasons for the haste in which the strike was undertaken was the jealousy existing between the numerous trades enrolled in the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union. Disputes were rife among them as to which trade should be first supported in a strike for new privileges. From letters which appeared subsequently in the Union press, it seems that the London shoemakers were also anxious to strike in the spring of 1834 for improved conditions, and it is complained that they were forestalled by "the ill-advised and premature strike of the tailors." The shoemakers thereupon withdrew from the Grand National Union in disgust at their be-

¹ See the copy of their circular reproduced in the report of the master tailors' meeting of April 28, reprinted at pp. 183-185. It appeared also in *The Crisis*, 3rd May 1834, and *The Poor Man's Guardian*, 3rd May 1834.

² *The Crisis*, 3rd May 1834.

trayal.¹ It is probable that the position of influence in the councils of the Grand National held by the tailors' secretary enabled him to secure permission for his trade to act before its proper time had arrived, and even before it was ready to take advantage of the opportunity. But if the other Unions were surprised and dismayed by this premature action, such was not the case with the master tailors, who acted promptly, vigorously, and ably. On 28th April, the day on which the strike began, and three days after the receipt of the formal notice from the men, the employers held a great meeting at the "Thatched House" Tavern in St. James's Street.² The meeting was very large, and was continued, by adjournment, at Willis's Rooms on the following day. Resolutions were unanimously carried to offer the sternest resistance to the men's demands, and a strong Committee was appointed to carry out these resolves. The whole proceedings of these meetings appeared as an advertisement in the *Times*, together with a list of some 450 employers who had signed the resolutions carried.³ The number of signatures was subsequently announced to have increased to about 600.⁴ It is interesting to notice that in this list occurs the name of "F. Place, Charing Cross," the son of the old supporter of the workmen's cause, who had himself not lost all sympathy with the men.

The *Times* now took up the case of the employers

¹ *The Pioneer*, 24th May 1834 and 28th June 1834. The latter contains a letter signed by the Grand Master of the Cordwainers' Order, announcing their withdrawal from the Grand National.

² The *Times* leader, Tuesday, 29th April 1834.

³ The *Times*, 30th April 1834. See the report reprinted pp. 183-187.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1st and 3rd May 1834.

with great vigour. Leader after leader appeared urging the utmost resistance to the men, and vilifying their cause in every way. In this it was supported by all the other regular newspapers, and the subject of the tailors' strike, having been raised by interested members in both Houses of Parliament, called forth almost unanimous expressions from the assembled legislators of opposition to the men, and wishes for the success of the masters.¹ On 1st May, however, a letter appeared in favour of the men, the writer urging in their defence that they were extremely peaceable, and that none of them had been prosecuted for attacking non-unionists, as some trades had been when on strike.² On the following day it was announced that many of the masters were now employing women, who had long made trousers and waistcoats, but were now being employed to make the coats also.³ The Union seems to have taken advantage of the unemployment of its members to send them into provincial cities to endeavour to organise the tailors there. Two such delegates went to Lewes and formed a Union, an action which the employers immediately met by a lock-out, ending after ten days in the complete defeat of the men, who returned to work, and signed a "Document" renouncing all connection with any Union.⁴ A similar experience befell an attempt to organise the tailors in Cambridge, who were also defeated by the prompt

¹ The *Times*, May 1834 *passim*.

² See the letter in the *Times*, 1st May 1834. It is signed by "G. Batson, on behalf and by the direction of Lodge No. 25 of the United Operative Tailors," who met in Porter Street, Soho. The Union had evidently made considerable progress in numbers for the lodges to have reached already to twenty-five or more.

³ The *Times*, 2nd May 1834.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3rd May and 13th May 1834.

action of the employers.¹ In Hull, however, the attempt was more successful. Two delegates from the tailors went down, and, after a mass meeting, enrolled no fewer than a thousand members of the Grand National Union in one evening.²

On 10th May the Committee of the master tailors republished the resolutions passed by the meetings of 28th and 29th April, together with a list of the Committee, now consisting of thirty-six of the largest employers, and the names of 630 firms who had by this time announced their adherence to the resolutions. They announce also that they have received very large subscriptions to the common cause, and that they are convinced of success, not a single employer who had signed the resolutions having yet given way.³ The Committee had two days earlier recorded a vote of thanks to the editor of the *Times* for his help to the employers' cause.⁴ In reply to this there appeared in *The Pioneer* a long address from the Committee of the journeymen. This document, which is couched in the grandiloquent language of all the Owenite manifestoes, announces that they have started their co-operative workshops, and advertises for customers for their goods.⁵ The following week another great meeting of the men was held, at which it was resolved to continue the strike, and appeals were made to the other trades and to the public for support and subscriptions.⁶ At this time there were some 15,000 or 20,000 tailors in London out on strike, and to pay so

¹ The *Times*, 13th May 1834.

² *Ibid.*, 5th May 1834.

³ *Ibid.*, 10th May 1834.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 8th May 1834.

⁵ See address, reprinted pp. 188-195.

⁶ See report of meeting, reprinted pp. 196-198.

large a number even the small sum of one shilling per day each, which appears to have been the sum granted, must have entailed a very heavy drain on the resources of the Unions.¹

A few days later the master tailors' Committee issued to the employers a circular containing a resolution passed by the Committee that no employer should henceforth accept any man into his employment until he had signed a declaration renouncing all connection with the Union.² This effort to insist upon the signature of the hated "Document," and the institution of a "Black List" of workmen which necessarily accompanied it, revived for a time the ~~new~~ flickering strike. On 24th May the "Operative Master Tailors," apparently the small masters who worked in their own shops or homes, met and passed resolutions in favour of the men;³ and the Executive Council of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union issued an eloquent appeal to all the trades to sink their differences and unite in giving uni-

¹ The *Times*, 12th May 1834, said 20,000 were on strike. But Robert Owen, in a speech reported in *The Crisis*, 10th May 1834, said there were fifteen or sixteen thousand. Another contemporary publication, however, states that at this time there were only 14,000 men tailors in London altogether, of whom only about one-half were out on strike. The anonymous author also adds that the employers in this dispute for the first time used a weapon later in the century much used by employers under similar circumstances. They endeavoured, he says, to bring over large numbers of French and German workmen to fill the places vacated by the London tailors, and were to some extent successful in their efforts. "See Trades Unions and Strikes," Anonymous, pp. 13-17; London, 1834, 12mo.

² See circular, reprinted pp. 199-200.

³ See report of meeting, reprinted pp. 201-202. The great masters declared, however, that this meeting was got up by the men themselves.

versal support to the tailors in their resistance to the "accursed Document."¹ But the funds of the various societies were now exhausted by the continual drain of great strikes upon them. An attempt was made by the Council of the Grand National to raise funds by a levy of 1s. 6d. per member upon the consolidated trades. But it does not appear to have succeeded, and was apparently abandoned after having caused the disruption or withdrawal of a number of the lodges of the Union.²

The strike, indeed, was now rapidly flickering to its close. Already, on 21st May, the *Times* had announced that the strike was collapsing, that the men were short of funds, and that over two thousand of them had then signed the "Document."³ On 5th June the employers held their last meeting. A long report was submitted by the Committee, in which they stated that they were assured of the truth of the statement that the men's funds were nearly exhausted, and doled out to them in the most miserable pittances. They added that at that date some four thousand of the journeymen had signed the declaration and returned to work on the old conditions.⁴ At this meeting Francis Place once more evinced his goodwill to the men by endeavouring to raise some opposition to the issue of the "Document"

¹ *The Pioneer*, 31st May 1834.

² The *Times*, 26th May 1834, announces the breaking up of all the lodges of weavers in Banbury, owing to the attempt to impose the levy upon their members.

³ The *Times*, 21st May 1834, states that only 3s. per week to the single men, and 4s. to the married men, could be given by the Union this week.

⁴ See report, reprinted pp. 203-210.

by the Committee. He is reported to have said that "he considered that it was very impolitic to ask the foremen or workmen to sign the declaration, and he should therefore move, as an amendment, that that part of the report be expunged, as in his opinion it would only serve to keep alive vindictive feelings." But, notwithstanding this generous appeal, the recommendations of the Committee were carried, on a vote, by 532 to 8 votes, and Place's last effort to help the men thus failed.¹ The defeat of the men now turned rapidly into a complete rout. On 9th June the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union held a meeting to consider the position in which it was placed by the attitude of the London master tailors. After much fiery invective nothing was done, and the meeting broke up, having agreed that Robert Owen should call a further meeting at his discretion later on. On 14th June *The Pioneer* in a leading article described the complete collapse of the strike, and ascribed it to the absence of proper support from other trades, urging also that the only remedy for the grievances of the working classes was a general strike of all the producers.² Meanwhile the tailors themselves held a large and excited meeting during the same week to discuss the prospects of their strike. They were, however, entirely unable to agree on the best way out of "their present awkward predicament," as it was described. Some speakers were in favour of signing the "Document" and returning to work to disobey it on the ground that it was extorted from them by force. Others urged further resistance, and the result was

¹ *The Times*, 10th June 1834.

² *The Pioneer*, 14th June 1834.

that, amid heated language, and charges and counter-charges, the meeting broke up in disorder.¹ Two weeks later the strike was entirely at an end, and the unfortunate journeymen had made the best terms they could get from their victorious employers. Both *The Crisis* and *The Pioneer* admit that the whole affair was a sorry fiasco. "They have not only been discomfited," says *The Pioneer*, "but have been driven from the field, and their ranks are entirely broken."²

Thus ended the attempt of the working tailors to resume that control over the conditions of their employment which they had enjoyed almost uninterruptedly for over a century. Their old-established clubs, weakened by the changes in the methods of production in the trade, which they had been unwilling to control and unable to resist, were practically swept out of existence in this disaster. With them went also the newly organised and feeble lodges of the recently established "United Operative Tailors," which was to have been the nucleus of their Grand National Union. For some years after this date the London tailors were left in an entirely unorganised condition. The Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, which was introduced with such a flourish of trumpets and took so prominent a part in leading the tailors to their defeat, did not long survive. The levies put on the members throughout the kingdom to support the great lock-out at Derby, and the tailors' strike in London, as well as many other smaller disputes, aroused the violent antagonism of the other sections who seceded in large bodies. Early in July the rapid breaking up of the organisation was

¹ *The Crisis*, 14th June 1834.

² *The Pioneer*, 28th June 1834 ; see also *The Crisis*, 28th June 1834.

announced,¹ and on 20th August 1834 it was finally dissolved, and its remnants re-formed into the "British and Foreign Consolidated Association of Industry, Humanity, and Knowledge," which was yet another of Robert Owen's high-sounding but abortive associations.²

Little more remains to be told of the history of the tailors' unions before we reach the period of the establishment of the existing organisations, with which we do not propose to deal. Later on, in 1834, the Manchester tailors had a great "turn-out," which lasted eighteen weeks, and ended in a complete defeat of the men, and their return to work after signing the now general "Document."³ Both in England and in Scotland we find that their organisations participated in the general contraction of Trade Unionism which followed the great outburst of 1832-34. This is evidenced by the fact that, when in 1837 the leaders of the Glasgow Cotton-Spinners, who had maintained a long and bitter strike for many months, were put on their trial for murder and conspiracy, no contribution towards the funds which were raised for their defence was made by any society of tailors. It is even stated in the report of their proceedings that the tailors' societies of Edinburgh and Greenock had "refused to subscribe" to this fund.⁴ In 1838, however, we find the Manchester tailors, somewhat recovered from their disastrous defeat of 1834, taking an active part in the great demonstration of the Manchester Poli-

¹ *The Crisis*, 12th July 1834.

² *Ibid.*, 23rd August 1834.

³ *The Times*, 28th October 1834.

⁴ See the "Report of the Trial of T. Hunter, P. Hackett, R. McNeil, J. Gibb, and W. McLean, &c.," by A. Swinton, Edinburgh, 1838, 8vo.

tical Union, which was held at Horsal Moor in September of that year.¹ A few years later the London tailors made an attempt at a general reorganisation of their trade. In June 1843 two meetings of the journeymen were held at the Southwark Literary Institution to endeavour to form a general trade protection society for the London workmen. The trade is described as being now in a worse condition than ever before. Home work, women's labour, and the increase of cheap "slop" clothing, combined with the absence of union among the men, had reduced them to a condition of great and real distress. At these meetings a Committee was appointed to draw up a constitution and rules for the new organisation.² A month later the draft rules were submitted to another meeting and approved, and a vigorous agitation for better conditions was determined upon.³ The following week an advertisement was inserted in *Lloyd's Weekly News* by the Central Committee of the new Society, announcing its formation, and urging the necessity of combination in the trade.⁴ Throughout the next six months there are notices of constant meetings held in all parts of London to form branches of the new organisation. One or two of the old "House of Call" clubs appear to have thrown in their lot with this new effort, but the majority of the ten or twelve such clubs which were still apparently in existence are described as being merely benefit societies, and

¹ See the MS. account of this demonstration preserved in the Place MSS., Brit. Mus., vol. 27, 820, Appendix I.

² See *Lloyd's Weekly News*, 11th and 18th June 1843. Articles by "Censorious."

³ *Ibid.*, 23rd July 1843.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 30th July 1843.

they declined to take any part in the movement.¹ This attempt to reorganise the London tailors was not, however, immediately successful, and for many years nothing further is to be heard of it.

Meanwhile we find that the tailors in other towns began also to feel the need for some means of coping with the growing evils in the trade. In 1853 the journeymen in Liverpool were engaged in a vigorous effort to reorganise their old-established Society, in order, as they said, "to remedy the evils of the slop system," and their efforts were ultimately successful.² In 1859-60 occurred the great strike and lock-out of the London building trades, owing to the men's demand for a nine hours' working day. Very large sums of money were raised to support the men in this conflict, and among others we find no less than twelve societies of tailors contributing in all some £90 to this cause. Among these there was at least one of the old London "House of Call" clubs, that at the "White Hart," and also the new general union of the London journeymen described as the "United Society of Tailors, London."³ A year later the then newly established London Trades Council published its first Directory of all the known Trade Unions and their branches in the United Kingdom. This fairly exhaustive list gave the titles and meeting-places of no fewer than

¹ *Lloyd's Weekly News*, 30th July 1843.

² See "Master and Man: a Dialogue," &c., by Henry Booth; London, 1853, 12mo.

³ See "Balance Sheet of the Strike and Lock-out in the London Building Trades, from 24th July 1859 to 1st May 1860." London, 1860, 8vo. The other societies were those at Brighton, Bristol, Dublin, Maynooth, Glasgow, Guildford, Leeds, Norwich, Sunderland, and Worcester.

forty-eight separate societies of tailors, distributed throughout forty-four principal towns of the kingdom. They include three societies in London, two of which appear to have been branches of the new United Operative Tailors' Society. The other was the last of the old "House of Call" clubs, which still met at the "White Hart," in Little Windmill Street, as it had done so long ago as 1768, and of the existence of which this is the last evidence obtainable.¹ It probably ceased to exist very shortly after this date.

This practically ended the efforts of the journey-men tailors to secure control over the conditions of their employment by means of local trade clubs, some of which had existed uninterruptedly over a century and a half. We have now only to record the formation of the organisations which still exist and flourish in the trade. In 1865 the Manchester Society of Tailors, inspired by the example of such other trades as the engineers and the carpenters, resolved to make an effort to form a national amalgamation of all the existing tailors' societies. Acting under the advice and influence of their very able

¹ See the "United Kingdom First Annual Trades Union Directory," London, 1861, 8vo. The other towns were—Ashton-under-Lyne, Bristol, Blackburn, Bolton, Bury, Burnley, Brighton, Belfast, Bradford (two societies), Birmingham, Cork, Chester, Carlisle, Cambridge, Cheltenham, Dublin, Derby, Darlington, Exeter, Eton, Glasgow, Hamilton, Halifax, Leeds, Leicester, Lincoln, Liverpool, Manchester, Norwich, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Nottingham, North Shields, Oldham, Preston, Rochdale, Rotherham, Sheffield (two societies), Stockport, Staleybridge, Wolverhampton, Wigan, Warrington, and York. No further issues of this Directory were made, owing to the expense, and the only existing copy of this now known is that in the possession of Mr. Sidney Webb.

secretary and leader, Mr. Peter Shorrocks, they issued invitations to all the known societies to meet them in a National Conference with this object. The Conference assembled in Manchester in March 1866, and consisted of seventy delegates, representing sixty-seven societies, with a total membership of about 6000 men, scattered throughout the whole of England. Letters were read from thirty-one other societies in existence in England and Ireland, expressing sympathy with the object of the meeting. The Conference sat for six days, and drew up a code of rules for the constitution and government of an "Amalgamated Society of Journeymen Tailors," and the Society was thereupon formally established.¹ At the end of the first quarter of its existence the Society showed a total of 7272 members, distributed throughout 118 societies in England only, the Irish and the London societies at first holding aloof.² The rules, as agreed to by the Conference, established, as will be seen, a loose kind of federation only. All the constituent societies preserved their entire local autonomy, and merely subscribed a small contribution per member per quarter to the general fund, which was to be devoted to trade defence.³ But the subsequent annual Conferences dis-

¹ "Report of the Conference of Deputies of the Tailors' Societies throughout England, assembled in . . . Manchester on the 12th of March 1866," &c.; Manchester, 1866, 8vo. Only one copy of this document exists, and that is the one preserved in the archives of the Society. I am indebted to the courtesy of the general secretary, Mr. T. Flynn, for its loan, and the permission to use it in this work.

² "First Quarterly Report of the Amalgamated Society of Journeymen Tailors," 1st June 1866; Manchester, 1866, 8vo. Preserved in the archives of the Society.

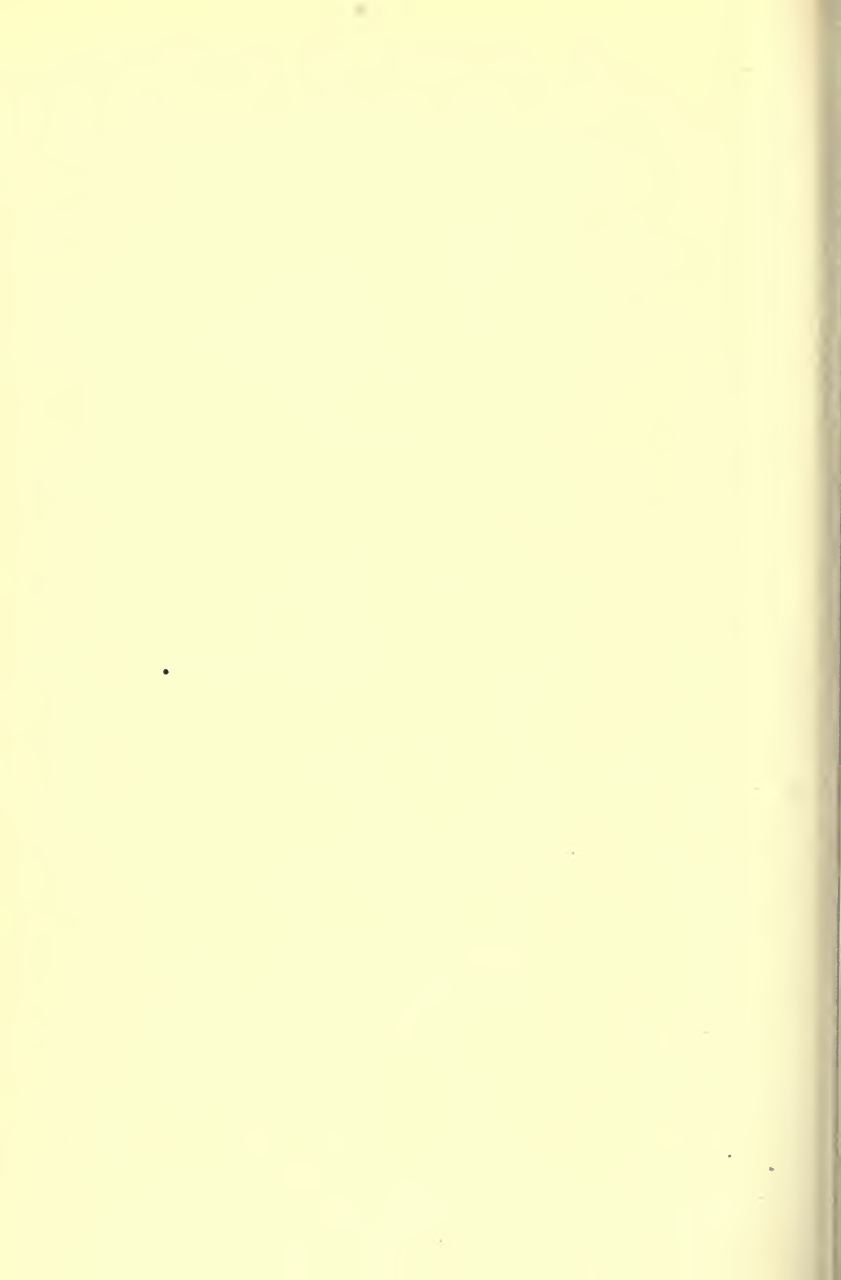
³ See the rules, reprinted pp. 211-223.

played a continually growing desire for closer centralisation; and the constitution of the Society, after undergoing many amendments in that direction, was finally altered so as to provide a completely amalgamated and centralised organisation. Within a few years of the establishment of the Society, the London Union and most of the Irish societies threw their lot in with it. Meanwhile the numerous societies of tailors in Scotland, fired by the example of their English brethren, and recognising the value of a National Union, united, later in the year 1866, to form a Society similar to the English Union for their own country. From that time both Societies have gone on steadily increasing in strength and influence, and perfecting the organisation in the light of acquired experience. At the end of 1894 the English Association consisted of 15,540 members in 340 branches, distributed throughout towns in England and Ireland; while the Scottish Association had 4478 members in 71 branches in its own country. Between them they probably include the whole of the organisations of journeymen tailors existing within the United Kingdom.

FRANK W. GALTON.

UNIVERSITY HALL, GORDON SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C., *May* 1896.

SELECT DOCUMENTS



SELECT DOCUMENTS

“THE CASE OF THE MASTER TAYLORS RESIDING WITHIN THE CITIES OF LONDON AND WESTMINSTER, IN RELATION TO THE GREAT ABUSES COMMITTED BY THEIR JOURNEYMEN. HUMBLY OFFER'D TO THE CONSIDERATION OF PARLIAMENT.¹

“THE Journeymen Taylors in and about the cities of London and Westminster, to the number of seven thousand and upwards, have lately entered into a combination to raise their wages, and leave off working an hour sooner than they used to do; and for the better carrying on their design, have subscribed their respective names in books prepared for that purpose, at the several houses of call or resort, (being publick-houses in and about London and Westminster) where they use; and collect several considerable sums of money to defend any prosecutions against them.

“At this time, there are but few of them come to work at all, and most of those that do, insist upon, and have, twelve shillings and ninepence per week

¹ Brit. Mus. 816, M. 14 (2), S. Sh. Fol. 1720 [1721]. Another copy is preserved in the Guildhall Library; see catalogue under *Merchant Tailors*.

(instead of ten shillings and ninepence per week, the usual wages), and leave off work at eight of the clock at night (instead of nine, their usual hour, time out of mind), and very great numbers of them go loitering about the town, and seduce and corrupt all they can meet: to the great hindrance and prejudice of trade.

“Upon complaint made to some of His Majesty’s Justices of the Peace, they have issued out their warrants against these offenders, as loiterers; by virtue whereof some of them have been bound over to the Sessions, and others have been taken up, and bound over to appear in His Majesty’s Court of King’s Bench at Westminster,¹ and the subscription books seized by virtue of the Secretary of State’s warrant: Yet they still continue obstinate, and persist not only in putting the abovesaid difficulties upon their masters, to the great prejudice of trade in general; but also in collecting great sums of moneys to support their unlawful combinations and confederacies.

“This combination of the Journeymen Taylors is and may be attended with many very ill consequences: inasmuch as the publick is deprived of the benefit of the labour of a considerable number of the subjects of this kingdom, and the families of several of these journeymen thereby impoverished, and likely to become a charge and burthen to the publick: And the very persons themselves who are under this unlawful combination, choosing rather to live in idleness, than to work at their usual rates and hours, will not only become useless and burthensome, but also very dangerous to the publick; and are of very ill example to journeymen in all other

¹ I have been unable to discover any report of this case.

trades ; as is sufficiently seen in the Journeymen Curriers, Smiths, Farriers, Sail-makers, Coach-makers, and artificers of divers other arts and mysteries, who have actually entred into confederacies of the like nature ; and the Journeymen Carpenters, Bricklayers, and Joyners have taken some steps for that purpose, and only wait to see the event of others.

“These Journeymen Taylors, when there is a hurry of business against the King’s Birth-day, or for making of mourning or wedding garments (as often happens), or other holidays, and always the summer seasons ; are not content with the unreasonable rates they at present insist upon ; but have demanded, and have had, three and four shillings a day, and sometimes more ; otherwise they will not work ; and at such times some will not work at all ; which is a great disappointment to gentlemen, and an imposition to the masters ; and, if suffer’d to go on, must increase the charge of making cloaths considerably.

“As to the said houses of call, or publick-houses, there are a great number of them in London and the suburbs, where these journeymen taylors frequently meet and use, and spend all or the greatest part of the moneys they receive for their wages ; and the masters of these houses of call support, incourage and abet these journeymen, in their unlawful combinations for raising their wages, and lessening their hours.¹

¹ This does not appear to have been any exaggeration of the relations between the journeymen tailors and the keepers of the houses of call where they resorted. The following extract shows that even thirty years later the conditions were the same. The writer, after describing the art required in the trade, continues :—

“In a taylor’s shop there are always two sorts of workmen ; first

“The Laws now in being for regulating of artificers, labourers, and servants, were made in the fifth of Queen Elizabeth, and might be well adapted for those times; but not altogether so proper for the trade of London and Westminster, &c., as it is now carry’d on.

“Therefore, the masters humbly hope this honourable house will take such measures, by passing of a law for redress of the publick grievances aforesaid, or grant such other relief, as in their great wisdom shall seem meet.”

the foreman, who takes measure when the master is out of the way, cuts and finishes all the work, and carries it home to the customer: This is the best workman in the shop, and his place the most profitable; for besides his cabbage, he has generally a guinea a week, and the drink-money given by the gentlemen on whom he waits to fit on their cloaths. The next class is the mere working taylor; not one in ten of them know how to cut out a pair of breeches; they are employ’d only to sew the seams, to cast the button-holes, and prepare the work for the finisher. Their wages, by Act of Parliament, is twenty pence in one season of the year, and half a crown the other; however, a good hand has a half a crown or three shillings: They are as numerous as locusts, are out of business about three or four months in the year, and generally as poor as rats: The house of call runs away with all their earnings, and keeps them constantly in debt and want. The house of call is an ale-house, where they generally use, the landlord knows where to find them, and masters go there to enquire when they want hands. Custom has established it into a kind of law, that the house of call gives them credit for victuals and drink, while they are unemploy’d; this obliges the journeymen, on the other hand, to spend all the money they earn at this house alone. The landlord, when once he has got them in his debt, is sure to keep them so, and by that means binds the poor wretch to his house, who slaves only to enrich the publican.” (From “The London Tradesman,” &c., &c., third edition, by R. Campbell, Esq., London, 1747, 8vo, Chap. xxxvii. pp. 190–194. Brit. Mus. 787, B. 2.)

In 1745 the London magistrates revoked the licences of five innkeepers for harbouring the tailors’ clubs in their houses in spite of the orders of the Privy Council to the contrary. See *ante*, pp. xxxi. *Uf.* also the statements at p. 38.

“REPORT OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS’
COMMITTEE ON THE MASTER TAYLORS’
PETITION.¹

“MR. GODFREY reported from the Committee, to whom the petition of the master taylor^s residing within the Cities of London and Westminster was referred, the matter, as it appeared to them ; which they had directed him to report to the House ; and he read the same in his place ; and afterwards delivered the Report in at the Clerk’s table ; where the same was read ; and is as follows, viz. :—

“That the said Committee, upon examination of several witnesses, do find the same to be as followeth ;

“That great numbers of Journeymen Taylors, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, have of late, in order to procure themselves greater wages than they used to have, combined together, and entered into Articles, compelling one another to insist upon unreasonable wages, and to work fewer hours in the day than usually they used to do ; and very often, when there is a hurry of work, insist upon seven or eight shillings a day :

“That complaint having been made thereof to His Majesty’s Justices of the Peace, several of the

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 16th February 1720 [1721], vol. xix. pp. 424, 425.

journeymen taylors have been bound over to the Quarter Sessions of the Peace ; and informations are ordered to be brought against them next Term ; yet they continue their unlawful meetings, and obstinate behaviour, to the great impoverishment of themselves and families, and may bring a great burthen on the publick :

“ That, by reason of these unwarrantable proceedings, the trade in general will be very much prejudiced ; and will set bad examples to other Artificers and Labourers. The Committee came to the following resolution :—“ Resolved, That it is the opinion of this Committee that the petitioners have fully proved the allegations of their said petition.’ ”

“AN ABSTRACT OF THE MASTER TAYLORS’
BILL BEFORE THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF
COMMONS; WITH THE JOURNEYMEN’S OBSERVA-
TIONS ON EACH CLAUSE OF THE SAID BILL.¹

“THE ABSTRACT.

“BE it enacted, that all contracts in, or not in writing already, or hereafter to be made, between any persons brought up in, or exercising the art of a taylor, within the weekly Bills of Mortality, for advancing their wages, or lessening their usual hours, shall be void.”

“And if any such person, (as aforesaid) within the limits aforesaid, shall after — day, keep up, continue, act in, make, enter into, sign, seal, or be knowingly interested or concerned in any contract contrary to the intent of this Act, every person so offending being lawfully convicted thereof by — witnesses, before any — Jus-

“THE OBSERVATIONS.

“IT would be well if the masters were under the same restrictions and penalties, in case they shall combine to lessen the men’s wages, or lengthen the hours; For the masters are now subscribing, and make purses of money to persecute the journeymen, as much as the journeymen are to defend themselves.”

“If the Justices have it absolutely in their power to punish according to the Statute, and the offender be committed without bail or mainprise, and there shall be no appeal from them, the masters and journeymen will always be together by the ears; and there will never be wanting of Petty-foggers, and little solicitors, to spirit

¹ Brit. Mus. 816, M. 14 (1), 1720 [1721], Fol. 4 pp. Another copy is preserved in the Guildhall Library; see catalogue under *Merchant Tailors*.

tices of the Peace, in their Jurisdiction, within the limits aforesaid, upon any information exhibited, or prosecution, within three months after the offence committed, every such offender shall, by order of — Justices, at their discretion, be committed either to —, there to remain, and be kept to hard labour, for any time not exceeding —, or to — as they shall see cause, there to remain without bail or mainprise, for any time not exceeding —.”

“And for limiting the hours of work and wages of such journeymen, Be it enacted, That from the — day of — 1720, the hours of work shall be from — in the morning, until — at night, allowing half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner.”

the masters and men into multitudes of strifes and contentions, to make business at Quarter-Sessions, and the liberties and properties of the subject be destroyed: And for fear the masters may have a better interest with the Justices than the men may have, the men desire, that they may have the liberty of the Habeas Corpus Act, and appeal to the Court of King's Bench, as all free-born subjects in all other cases have.”

“’Tis certain, that to work fifteen hours per day is destructive to the men's healths, and especially their sight, so that at forty years old a man is not capable by his work to get his bread: Therefore the journeymen are willing to work from six in the morning until eight at night, allowing half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner, which is longer by two hours than labourers and artificers are obliged by any statute extant to work, and longer than most other labourers and artificers now do. And by the Statute of the 5th of Elizabeth, they had an hour in the afternoon to drink and sleep in; and from September to March they were to work but from the morning to the evening.”

“And the wages from the

“The men think, that they

— day of —, to the — day of —, not to exceed — per day, and from the — day of —, until the — day of —, — per day, which wages the masters shall be obliged to pay the men; or according to such rates for the time they shall employ them.”

“And in regard it may be necessary to alter the wages and hours of work aforesaid: Be it enacted, That the Justices at Quarter-Sessions shall alter the wages and hours at their discretion, and to publish such order in such manner as they shall think fit; and that all taylors and their journeymen shall observe the same, or be

reasonably deserve for fourteen hours' labour, three shillings per day from the 10th of March to the 29th of June, and all the other part of the year two shillings and sixpence per day: And that even such wages (considering the time they are unemploy'd) is not sufficient to support them the year round; and the masters ought to be confined to employ them for some certain time, for they commonly turn them off in the middle of the day. And by the Statute of the 5th of Elizabeth, the masters were obliged to employ them a year certain, and give a quarter's warning, under a penalty on both sides; which was some incouragement for men to work at a smaller rate: Tho' eighteenpence per day, which we suppose was then given (considering the scarcity of money, and the low prices of all commodities), was more than three shillings per day at this time.”

“If the Justices shall settle the men's wages, how is it possible that each man shall be rewarded according to his merit? For some men can merit three shillings per day, when another cannot merit two, which the masters will allow; so that every man will be paid alike, and there will be no incouragement for

punished at the discretion of the Justices, being lawfully convicted of such offence, after knowledge of any such rates or alterations thereof to be made, as aforesaid, upon any prosecution to be commenced within — after the offence committed.”

“And, be it enacted, That if any journeyman retained or employed as a taylor, shall depart from such service before the end or term for which he was hired, or until the work for which he was hired to do shall be finished, (if the person so retaining so long will have him and pay him his wages ;) or not being hired, shall refuse to work at the request of any master, for the usual wages and hours limited (unless for some reasonable cause, to be allowed by the Justices,) for every such

merit ; and such a settlement of wages will be a very great oppression both to the masters and the men, and a disappointment to gentlemen, by reason, that the most ingenious will thereby be obliged to leave the town, and then gentlemen can't be supplied with such cloaths as are required at a coronation, or birth-days of the Royal Family ; and such men that are but indifferent workmen will never be employed, by reason, that the masters are obliged to give them certain wages, which may possibly be more than such a man can deserve. But if the wages must be settled, the men desire that the Court of King's Bench may do it, from whence we may expect more justice, and less partiality.”

“It would be very reasonable, that the masters should be constrained to employ the men for a certain time ; for here it is in the power of the master to make a man work for such time as he shall hire him, and that the man shall be punished if he refuses to work at any master's request, notwithstanding the journeyman may have a prospect of being a master himself, which consequently his master will endeavour to prevent : And the master, notwithstanding he

offence to be punished —, being first lawfully convicted, as aforesaid.”

shall hire the man for a week, if he thinks fit, he shall turn him off at any time sooner, and the poor fellow seek for himself; so that the masters will be at a certainty, and the men at none; which we take to be very unreasonable. And if any master shall command a man to work, a poor insolvent master may command the service of as many men as he pleases, and when they have done their work may never get their wages; for the poor man that has not a penny to buy him bread without his wages be paid him, shall have no other recourse but the law to get his money: Wherefore the journeymen desire, that a Judge of the King's Bench may punish the master at discretion, for not paying the wages; or that upon affidavit made that the master refuses to pay, the Judge may commit him to prison until such time he doth pay.”

“And to prevent the masters from seducing another's journeymen from the work he is employed about: Be it enacted, that if any person, using the art of a taylor, shall pay, or allow any greater wages than limited by this Act, every such person, being lawfully convicted, upon any prosecution commenced within — after

“There are very few journeymen that are skilled in laced, and other rich cloaths, and if such journeymen are debarr'd going from one master to another, some masters could supply gentlemen, when others could not; and some gentlemen would (especially at the Birth-days) be very much disappointed: Neither

the offence committed, shall be punished —, and every journeyman for taking such wages shall be punished ; and all such contracts, promises, &c., to be void.”

“Nevertheless, it shall not extend to destroy any contracts, or promises made for wages, for working before or after the hours limited.”

can the King's Liveries, Guard Cloaths, and Trumpeters' be made, by the reason, that master-tailors do inquire where such men are that are qualify'd to perform such work ; and are obliged to have such men, altho' they are employ'd with other masters. And the men humbly conceive, that to be obliged to work with any master, is contrary to the liberties and properties of the subjects of England, and may be attended with innumerable inconveniences.”

“Wherefore the journeymen desire, that the masters may be obliged to employ them for some certain time, and be under the same penalties for non-performance ; or, at least, pay them the wages for the time they hire them for ; and that they may have an immediate relief for their wages, and not be put to the tedious and expensive way of getting it by law. We don't find by this Bill, that the masters are under any confinements or penalties, tho' the journeymen are subject to all the hardships imaginable.”

“THE CASE OF THE JOURNEYMEN-TAYLORS
RESIDING IN THE CITIES OF LONDON AND WEST-
MINSTER, MOST HUMBLY OFFERED TO THE CON-
SIDERATION OF BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.¹

“THE difference between the journeymen and masters is this, viz., The masters expect the men to work from six in the morning till nine at night, which is fifteen hours, and at the rate of twenty pence per day, and seem by their published case to plead custom for it.

“The Journeymen alledge, that to work for so many hours is destructive to their healths, and makes them incapable to get their bread after forty years of age, which the masters are very sensible of: And that twenty pence per day is not sufficient to support them and their families.

“They likewise humbly conceive, that they are not by any law in being obliged to work such intolerable hours for such mean wages, which are much less than any other journeymen receive, especially the Curriers, Smiths, Farriers, Coach-makers, and all other Artificers, which are taken notice of in the master taylors’ case.

“And as there are no statute laws to confine them

¹ Brit. Mus. 816, M. 14 (3), 1720 [1721], S. Sh. Fol. Another copy is preserved in the Guildhall Library; see catalogue under *Merchant Taylors*.

to such hours and wages, they are very certain there is no custom, as the masters insinuate; for the men do not know at any time how long they are hired; for it being usual for the masters to discharge the men at twelve a clock in the middle of the day, and pay them but for half a day's work; and so for the journeymen to leave their work at the like hour, as occasion shall require on either side.¹

“And as for their wages, it has always been uncertain; for each master, at his own discretion, and according to the seasons of the year, and as his business requires, employs such men as he thinks most useful to him, and for so long or short a time as he thinks there will be occasion; and doth adapt each man's wages according to the difference of his capacity; so that sometimes one man hath three shillings per day, when another hath but two; and each master has it in his choice, to employ what men, and for what time, and for what wages he

¹ The wretched picture of ill-health, unemployment, early old age, and misery of the journeymen here depicted does not appear to have been very much overdrawn. There seems little doubt that at this time the unfortunate journeymen tailors of London were reduced to a very miserable condition. A contemporary author, writing in 1728, a few years after this petition, in giving a description of the sights and places of interest in London, makes the following extraordinary comment upon these workmen:—

“Valetudinary people I would advise to take the air three or four times a week, or oftener, if their business will permit them, in Black-Fryers, soon after twelve at noon, where I am fully persuaded that a true view of those wretched emblems of death and hunger, the Journeymen Taylors, will recover the most deprav'd appetite, sooner than the best devised stomatick.” (See “A Trip through London; containing Observations on Men and Things,” by a Berkshire Gentleman, p. 47; London, 1728, 62 pp. 8vo.; Guildhall Library.)

thinks fit; and the men[^] (like free-born subjects, under so happy a constitution as this) have it in their choice to work accordingly.

“But should the masters or the men be confined to certain wages, there would be no encouragement for merit, and the idle and ignorant would be as well rewarded as the industrious and ingenious.

“If the masters were confined to employ men for a certain time, there would be some colour for the men to work at twenty pence per day; but such is the misfortune of the Taylors’ Trade, that they are not employed much above half the year; and the large wages they get in the height of work (which are given them voluntarily by the masters, and not extorted by the men) is not sufficient to support them that part of the year they are unemploy’d.

“If the masters would extort less from their customers in the prices of the goods they sell, and charge more for the making the cloaths, they might afford to give the journeymen better wages, and do justice both to their customers and the journeymen: But the masters finding their profits more in the extravagant prices they set on their goods, than in the labouring parts (which they have no share in), don’t value if the journeymen starve.”

“Anno Septimo Georgii I. Stat. 1. C. 13.

“AN ACT FOR REGULATING THE JOURNEY-
MEN TAYLORS WITHIN THE WEEKLY BILLS
OF MORTALITY.¹

“WHEREAS great numbers of journeymen taylor, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, and others, who have served apprenticeships, or been brought up in the art and mystery of a taylor, have lately departed from their services without just cause, and have entred into combinations to advance their wages to unreasonable prices, and lessen their usual hours of work, which is of evil example, and manifestly tends to the prejudice of trade, to the encouragement of idleness, and to the great increase of the poor : for remedy thereof, may it please your most excellent Majesty, that it may be enacted ; and be it enacted by the King’s most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That all contracts, covenants or agreements in writing, or not in writing, heretofore made or entred into, or hereafter to be made or entred into, by or between any persons brought up in, or pro-

¹ The Statutes at Large, vol. xiv., 1718–1722. Public Acts. See *ante*, p. xxi. n., for an account of the “Weekly Bills of Mortality.”

fessing, using or exercising the art or mystery of a taylor, or journeyman taylor, in making up men's or women's work, in the Cities of London and Westminster, or either of them, or within the weekly bills of mortality, for advancing their wages, or for lessening their usual hours of work, shall be, and are hereby declared to be illegal, null and void to all intents and purposes; and further, that if any taylor, journeyman taylor, or other person brought up in, or professing, using or exercising the art or mystery of a taylor, or journeyman taylor, within the limits aforesaid, shall at any time or times after the first day of May one thousand seven hundred and twenty one, keep up, continue, act in, make, enter into, sign, seal, or be knowingly interested or concerned in any contract, covenant or agreement, by this act declared to be illegal, null and void, every person or persons so offending, being lawfully convicted thereof upon the oath or oaths of one or more credible witness or witnesses before any two justices of the peace in their jurisdictions within the limits aforesaid, upon any information exhibited, or prosecution, within three months after the offence committed, (which oaths the said justices are hereby impowered and required to administer) every such offender shall, by order of such justices, at their discretion be committed, either to the house of correction, there to remain and be kept to hard labour for any time not exceeding two months, or to the common gaol, as they shall see cause, there to remain without bail or mainprize for any time not exceeding two months.

“II. And for declaring, limiting and appointing the hours of work, and wages for journeymen taylors,

servants, and apprentices to taylors, within the limits aforesaid ; be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That from and after the first day of May One thousand seven hundred and twenty one, the hours of work for all journeyman taylors, servants and apprentices to taylors, and other persons employed, or to be employed, or retained as taylors, in making up men's or women's work, or such servants or apprentices within the cities of London and Westminster, or either of them, or within the weekly bills of mortality, shall be from six of the clock in the morning until eight of the clock at night ; excepting only that there shall be allowed by the master one penny halfpenny a day for breakfast, and one hour for dinner, in the time aforesaid ; and for the said time, or hours of work aforesaid, there shall be paid unto every journeyman taylor, or other person employed, or to be employed or retained as a journeyman taylor, for his work during the hours aforesaid, the wages and sums following, (that is to say) from the five and twentieth day of March to the four and twentieth day of June, any sum not exceeding two shillings *per diem*, and for the rest of the year one shilling and eight pence *per diem*.

“ III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in case any taylor or taylors, or other person or persons acting as such, or carrying on, using or exercising the art or mystery of a taylor within the limits aforesaid, shall hire, retain or employ any journeyman or other person, not being an apprentice, he, she or they so hiring, retaining or employing any such journeyman or other person aforesaid (apprentices excepted) shall, and are hereby

obliged and required to pay them after the rate aforesaid, for the full time for which he, she or they so hire, retain or imploy them, or agree so to do.

“ IV. And for more easy recovering the said wages, it shall be lawful for any two justices of the peace within the limits aforesaid, and they are hereby authorized and required, upon complaint made for that purpose, to summon before them the party or parties offending, and for nonpayment of such wages, or sufficient satisfaction given for the same to the party or parties aggrieved, to issue their warrant or warrants for levying such wages due, as aforesaid, by distress and sale of the offender's goods, rendring the overplus to the owner; and for want of sufficient distress to commit the party or parties offending to the common gaol, there to remain without bail or mainprise, until he, she or they shall pay or give satisfaction to the party for the same.

“ V. And in regard it may be reasonable upon some occasions to alter the wages and hours of work aforesaid, be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall and may be lawful to and for the justices of the peace in their respective jurisdictions within the limits aforesaid, at their general quarter-sessions, and they are hereby authorized and required, upon application to be made to them for that purpose, to take into their consideration the plenty or scarcity of the time, and other circumstances necessarily to be considered, and to alter the wages and hours of work aforesaid, and to order and appoint what wages and allowances shall be paid or made to journeyman taylors, or servants, retained or imployed, or to be retained or imployed,

in the art or mystery of a taylor, as aforesaid, within the limits aforesaid, and what hours they shall work, and shall make such alterations therein, from time to time, as such justices at any such general sessions shall think fit, upon application to be made to them for that purpose, and such justices shall, within the space of fourteen days next after such general sessions, cause such rates and alterations, from time to time, to be printed, published, and made known, in such manner as to them shall seem meet, at the reasonable expence of any person or persons desiring the same; and from and after publication thereof, all taylor, and their journeymen, and servants, within the limits aforesaid, are hereby strictly required to observe the same, upon pain of imprisonment by such justices, for any time not exceeding two months, being lawfully convicted of such offence, after knowledge or information of any such rates or alterations thereof to be made, as aforesaid, upon any prosecution to be commenced within six days after the offence committed.

“ VI. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person actually retained or employed as a journeyman taylor, or servant, in the art or mystery of a taylor, as aforesaid, within the limits aforesaid, shall at any time or times, after the first day of May one thousand seven hundred and twenty one, depart from his service before the end of the term or time for which he is or shall be hired or retained, or until the work, for which he was hired or retained, shall be finished, or not being retained or employed, shall refuse to enter into work or employment (after request made for that pur-

pose by any master taylor, for the wages and hours limited, or to be limited and appointed, as aforesaid) unless it be for some reasonable or sufficient cause, to be allowed by two justices of the peace within the limits aforesaid ; then in every such case every person so offending, being thereof lawfully convicted, as aforesaid, shall be sent to the house of correction, there to be kept to hard labour for any time not exceeding two months.

“ VII. And for more effectual preventing the mischiefs and inconveniences which may happen by non-observance of this act, or by seducing or enticing any of the journeyman taylors, or servants aforesaid, from one master to another ; be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any taylor or other person professing, using or exercising the art or mystery of a taylor, as aforesaid, within the limits aforesaid, or any other person aforesaid, shall at any time after the first day of May one thousand seven hundred and twenty one, give, allow or pay any more or greater wages than as aforesaid, for the hours of work aforesaid, to any servant or journeyman, in money, or otherwise, contrary to the intent of this act, every person so offending, being thereof lawfully convicted upon any prosecution commenced within three months after the offence committed, shall forfeit and pay the sum of five pounds, one moiety whereof shall be to the informer or prosecutor, and the other moiety to the poor of the parish or place where the offence shall be committed ; and every such servant or journeyman taking more or greater wages than as aforesaid, for the hours of work aforesaid, being thereof convicted as aforesaid, shall be sent to the

house of correction, there to be kept to hard labour for any time not exceeding two months ; and all retainers, promises, obligations or securities, for any wages, pay or allowances, contrary to this act, shall be null and void.

“VIII. Provided, That this act or any thing therein contained, shall not extend to hinder the paying or receiving any more or other wages or allowances, which shall be agreed upon, for working before or after the hours of work limited or appointed, or to be limited or appointed, as aforesaid.

“IX. Provided also, That it shall and may be lawful for any person aggrieved by any order or orders to be made by any two or more justices of the peace, as aforesaid, to appeal to the justices of the peace assembled at the next general quarter-sessions, to be holden for the city, division, parish or place where such order shall be made, giving six days notice of such appeal; and such justices in such general quarter-sessions shall finally hear and determine the matter, and shall have power to award reasonable costs to either party, as to them shall seem just.

“X. Provided also, That any person convicted of any offence against this act, and who shall suffer for the same accordingly, shall not be otherwise punished, or suffer for such offence by authority of any law now in force.”

“THE KING AGAINST JOURNEYMEN-
TAYLORS OF CAMBRIDGE.

“Monday, 6 November 1721.¹

“ONE Wise, and several other journeymen-taylors, of or in the town of Cambridge, were indicted for a conspiracy amongst themselves to raise their wages; and were found guilty.

“It was moved in arrest of judgment, upon several errors in the record,

“First, that the defendants, having the addition of ‘yeomen,’ are, notwithstanding, charged with a conspiracy not to work as ‘journeymen-taylors,’ which is a repugnancy.

“It was answered that ‘yeoman’ is a good addition, for a yeoman may be a taylor.

“The Court held, that there was no inconsistency between the addition of ‘yeoman’ and the addition of ‘taylor.’

“Secondly, the caption is not good, being ‘*ad general quartial Sess: pacis, &c.*’ omitting ‘*domini regis*’ after ‘*pacis*.’ This exception has been several times held fatal, and is very different from the cases where they are omitted after the words ‘*Just. dict. domini regis ad pac. in com. præd. conservand. assign.*’ In Hilary Term in the first year of Queen Anne, and

¹ Modern Reports, Case 7, vol. viii. p. 11; fifth edition. London, 1795, 8vo.

in Hilary Term in the eleventh year of Queen Anne, two indictments were quashed for this exception.

"It was answered that this objection has been often over-ruled, for it must be intended the King's peace, and that the case in *Ventris* has been denied for law.

"The Court was of the same opinion, and said, that of late years this objection had never prevailed.

"Thirdly, no crime appears upon the face of this indictment, for it only charges them with a conspiracy and refusal to work at so much *per diem*, whereas they are not obliged to work at all by the day, but by the year, by 5 Eliz. C. 4.

"It was answered, that the refusal to work was not the crime, but the conspiracy to raise the wages.

"THE COURT: The indictment, it is true, sets forth that the defendants refused to work under the wages which they demanded; but although these might be more than is directed by the statute, yet it is not for the refusing to work, but for conspiring, that they are indicted, and a conspiracy of any kind is illegal, although the matter about which they conspired might have been lawful for them, or any of them, to do, if they had not conspired to do it, as appears in the case of 'The Tubwomen *v.* the Brewers of London.'

"Fourthly, that this fact being laid in the town of Cambridge, it did not appear by the record in what county Cambridge was, which it ought to do, because there are other towns of that name in England, viz., in Gloucestershire; and so it is a mis-trial: for there is no more reason to award the *venire* to the sheriff of Cambridge than of any other county. The *venire facias* is awarded to the

sheriff of the county of Cambridge, commanding him to summon a jury, *de vicineto vilicæ Cant.* In the margin of the indictment it is *villa de C.*; in the indictment the *venue* is alledged only *apud villam de C.*; and though the *certiorari* to remove it is directed *Just domini regis de villa C. in com. nostro C.*, this error is not helped by naming the county in the *certiorari* to remove the indictment, because that writ is only an order of this court. Neither shall it be intended that Cambridge is in the county of Cambridge, because this is a criminal case, and intendments are never allowed in prosecutions of this nature.

“It was answered, that the fact being laid in the town of Cambridge, it shall be intended that the town is within the county of Cambridge, for which Long’s case is an authority in point.

“THE COURT: If a *venire facias* be directed to the sheriff of Cambridge to return a jury, and he returns one *de vicineto Cantabrigiæ*, it is good; for Cambridge being mentioned in several Acts of Parliament, the court must take notice of such acts, and upon such a return will intend that Cambridge is in the county of Cambridge. In the case of *Withers v. Warner*, in Hilary Term, in the sixth year of George the first, we took judicial notice that ‘London’ and ‘the city of London’ are all one. The *certiorari* is directed, ‘To the justices of our lord the king of the town of Cambridge, in our County of Cambridge,’ and returned by the justices of the *vill* in the county of Cambridge; so that it will be a very foreign intendment to suppose the *vill* to be out of the county.

“Fifthly, this indictment ought to conclude ‘*contra formam statuti* ;’ for by the late statute 7 Geo. I. C. 13., journeymen-tailors are prohibited to enter into any contract or agreement for advancing their wages, &c.¹ And the statute of 2 & 3 Edw. 6. C. 15., makes such persons criminal.

“It was answered, that the omission in not concluding this indictment *contra formam statuti* is not material, because it is for a conspiracy, which is an offence at common law. It is true, the indictment sets forth, that the defendants refused to work under such rates, which were more than enjoined by the statute, for that is only two shillings a day ; but yet these words will not bring the offence, for which the defendants are indicted, to be within that statute, because it is not the denial to work except for more wages than is allowed by the statute, but it is for a conspiracy to raise their wages, for which these defendants are indicted. It is true, it does not appear by the record that the wages demanded were excessive ; but that is not material, because it may be given in evidence.

“THE COURT : This indictment need not conclude *contra formam statuti*, because it is for a conspiracy, which is an offence at common law.

“So the judgment was confirmed by the whole court *quod capiantur*.”

¹ See *ante*, footnote, p. xxvi. n.

THE JOURNEYMEN TAILORS OF DUBLIN,

1725-1729.

“ A new poem on the ancient and loyal Society of Journey-men Taylors, who are to dine at the King’s-Inn’s-Hall, this present Monday, being the 26th of this instant, July, 1725. By H[enry] N[elson], Bricklayer, one of the Brethren.¹

“ ASSIST my sacred muse, my pen inspire ;
And fill my breast with soft poetick fire,
That I may write, and the just merits raise
Of Taylor’s journeymen deserving praise ;
Nay, help me more that I may higher climb,
And make my thoughts transparent and sublime,
To shew their worth in every flowing line.
A task so noble suits the brightest pen
To write the merits of these journeymen ;
Wrapt in close Union by the Laws they’ve made,
Superior be to any other trade ;
For in conjunction altogether they,
In grandeur meet upon St James’s day :
Where every man most decently appear,
Then all to church a sermon for to hear.

¹ Brit. Mus. 839, M. 23 (42) ; another copy, 1890, E. 5 (164) ; Dublin, 1725, S. Sh. Fol. Henry Nelson, a bricklayer by trade, was elected a member of the Society of Journeymen Tailors on account of his poetic gifts. He wrote similar poems about this time for the Builders’ Society in Dublin, of which he was also a member. This poem of 1725 called forth the following satire, containing nothing of interest, entitled, “ A New London Poem ; on the procession of the Journey-

When that is done, in state they walk along
 And causes wonder in the crowding throng;
 Thus in great order all to dine they go
 Where meats are plenty, and where liquors flow,
 The world ne'er saw so much variety,
 As is produced from this Society,
 Let time their actions write in Books of fame,
 Who Age supports and orphans young maintain,
 Their sick relieve, likewise their dead interr,
 What action greater can the world prefer ;

men taylors of the City of Dublin, on St. James's day, and their behaviour at dinner ; or, an answer to a poem published by their authority. Written by a British Author" (Brit. Mus. 839, M. 23 (39), S. Sh. Fol ; London printed, and reprinted Dublin, 1725). In 1726 was published "A poem in honour of the antient and loyal Society of the Journeymen taylors, who are to dine at the King's Inns, on Monday the 25th inst., July 1726. Written by H. N., Bricklayer, one of the Brethren. Signed by order of William Butt, Master" (Brit. Mus. 1890, E. 5 (168), S. Sh. Fol. ; Dublin, 1726). This was immediately followed by a satire entitled "The triumphant Taylors ; or the vanquished lice. A satyr on the Taylors' procession, July the 25th, 1726" (Brit. Mus. 1890, E. 5. (173), S. Sh. Fol. ; Dublin, 1726). In 1727 appeared "A new poem on the procession of journeymen taylors ; who are to dine at the King's Inns on Tuesday the 25th of this instant, July 1727 Written by H. Nelson, *Bricklayer*, a member of the Society. Delivered to the printer hereof by Thomas Daily, Master of the said Society" (Brit. Mus. 1890, E. 5 (166), S. Sh. Fol. ; Dublin, 1727). The usual satire appeared as follows : "A satyrical poem on the Society of journeymen taylors" (Brit. Mus. 1890 ; E. 5 (169), S. Sh. Fol., N.D., but appears to have been written in reply to the previous poem). There is neither a poem nor a satire dated 1728, though of the several undated some may have belonged to that year. There are, however, two poems dated 1729, both by the same writer, and giving different masters and assistants, which seems to imply a misprint in one of the cases. They are : "Poem on the procession of Journeymen Taylors, July the 28th, 1729. Written by Henry Nelson, Bricklayer. Francis Amiges, Master. Edward Kelly, John Martin, Edward Walsh, Edward Walsh, Assistants" (Brit. Mus. 1890, E. 5 (170), S. Sh. Fol. ; Dublin, 1729). And also, "A poem in praise of the loyal and charitable Society of journeymen taylors, who are to dine at the King's Inns, this present Monday, being the 28th of July 1729. Written

Fly swift report, all this our nation o'er,
And waft these tydings to the British shoar,
And there proclaim with lowdest acclamation
The Taylors' praise throughout the British nation,
Whose art's as ancient as since the creation.
Adam himself 'twas he begun the trade,
And for himself and Eve both aprons made.

RICHARD NEWGEN, *present master*.

ROBERT BOUCHER, *late master*."

by Henry Nelson. Thomas Heater, Master. Bartly Cusack, Charles Farrel, Thomas Daly, Francis Erines, Stewards" (Brit. Mus. 1890, E. 5 (167), S. Sh. Fol. ; 1729). It may well have been, however, that the men had now formed themselves into two clubs, meeting at different houses of call, but dining together once a year, just as the London tailors had numerous clubs at their many houses of call.

There remain four other of these curious documents, two poems and two satires. They are as follows :—"A new poem in honour of the journeymen taylors. Written by J. M." (Brit. Mus. 1890, E. 5 (165), S. Sh. Fol. ; Dublin, N.D.). Also, "A poem in praise of the journeymen taylors" (Brit. Mus. 839, M. 23 (139), S. Sh. Fol. ; Dublin, N.D.). And, "A Satyr on the journeymen taylors. Written by R. A., Shoemaker" (Brit. Mus. 1890, E. 5 (171), S. Sh. Fol. ; Dublin, N.D.). Lastly, "The Tailor's exercise, grace, psalms, and catechism" (Brit. Mus. 1890, E. 5 (172), S. Sh. Fol. ; Dublin, N.D. A very coarse production).

“THE CASE OF THE JOURNEYMEN TAYLORS
IN AND ABOUT THE CITIES OF LONDON AND
WESTMINSTER.¹

“A JOURNEYMAN to any sort of trade or Handycraft, is understood to be one, who has by apprenticeship or other contract, served such a portion of his time to that particular business which he professes to occupy, as renders him capable to execute every branch or part of the trade; whereby he is at full liberty, if his ability and condition of life will permit, to set up in the world as a master of his profession; and is only call'd Journeyman, while he continues to serve under the direction of others, at certain wages, such as he can agree for from day to day; but as there appears to be an immense variety in the genius of men for arts and sciences, the true value of every man's work and labour, must be proportion'd to his capacity and industry, which makes it impracticable, or at least very inequitable, by any positive law, to put an equal value on every man's labour; and more especially to put such a restriction on one particular business, and no other whatsoever. This however being the state into which the Journeymen Taylors in and about the Cities of London and Westminster are most un-

¹ Brit. Mus., Place MSS. 27,799, January 7, 1744 [1745], with MSS. marginal notes by Francis Place.

happily reduced, by some very particular and severe clauses in an Act of Parliament, which by the arts of a few, was obtained in the reign of his late Majesty King George the First, these poor innocent sufferers humbly beg leave to lay their case open to the publick, appealing thereby to every man's conscience, who has a just regard to the ancient freedom of an English government, and the liberties of his country.

“ It is well known that the before-mentioned Act of Parliament was, at a considerable expence, solicited for and at length obtain'd, by the assiduous application of a few rich tradesmen, who pretended to act for, and under the name of, the Master-Tailors of London: Notwithstanding, that, by far the honestest and wisest part of that body of men, greatly disapproved in their own minds, and in their private conduct, the ambitious views of those busy managers; and this sufficiently appears by the good correspondence which has all along subsisted between great numbers of the most creditable masters and journeymen. But to set this matter in this truest light, it will be proper that the wages of $2/7\frac{1}{2}$ *per diem*, now expected, and which for the most part has been constantly received by the journeymen from the Master Tailors, be compared with the profits which these masters daily make of their journeymen's labour; from whence it will evidently appear who receives in proportion, the most immoderate and exorbitant gain, and to what a miserable condition the journeymen must be reduced, if they are obliged to work for statute wages, which is only $1/9\frac{1}{2}$ *per diem*.

“Yet, lest it should be thought too invidious in the journeymen here to set down the profits which the Master Taylors daily make in every minute article of their bills, it shall suffice in gross, to set forth the very lowest that is commonly charged in a Master Taylor’s bill to his customer, for the whole of a suit of full-trimm’d superfine cloth, which amounts to £7. 13. 2.,¹ whereas the prime cost, out of the master’s pocket, for all materials and Journeymen’s wages, at $2/7\frac{1}{2}$ *per diem*, is but £6. 6. 11., so that out of every such suit of cloths, without any trouble to themselves, the masters gain £1. 6. 3.; and in velvets, silks, gold and silver-laced cloaths and liveries, the profits in the whole arising to the masters, is double of what is gain’d in the others, besides the advantages of those who buy their goods in a wholesale way; all which, if required to descend to particulars, can be clearly proved upon oath by the journeymen. And thus if it be found on a medium of all sorts of work, that from every journeyman’s labour by the week, the master receives in all about 40/- profit to himself, what fine estates may be acquired by such masters as frequently employ from ten or fifteen to twenty or thirty journeymen. On the other hand, the poor laborious journeymen are confined to sit double on the board, from six in the morning until eight at night, without any other gain or perquisite whatsoever than their wages, and are never call’d for or employ’d by the masters above one-half, or at most two-thirds of the year; whereas it is evident

¹ Compare this with statements in the following documents at pp. 40-41.

to all impartial judges that such of them as happen to have wives and children cannot possibly subsist the year round, upon the wages they so precariously receive; which, for the whole year, very rarely amounts to above fifteen or sixteen pence a day. And they humbly appeal to the publick, whether in such circumstances, it be not very hard that a poor journeyman taylor, however engaged or employ'd at home to maintain his family, shall be dragg'd from thence like a slave at the will of any master, and sent to the House of Correction, or press'd for a recruit, and perhaps transported to the plantations, to the utter ruin of himself and all that belongs to him. Were these masters obliged to employ their journeymen all the year round, or in some sort to aid and assist them when they could no otherwise help themselves, there would be some colour of reason for claiming such authority over them; but as matters stand it is a most notorious breach on the rights and liberties of the subject, and a plain infringement of *Magna Charta*, which in Section 46, says, *No freeman shall be taken or imprison'd, distress'd, outlaw'd, or banish'd, or any ways destroy'd, but by the legal judgment of his peers.* That the journeymen taylors should at this time be pick'd out as the only class of men amongst His Majesty's Subjects on whom such extraordinary and singular hardships are to be laid, will appear in a very odd light, if the poor men's conduct amongst themselves and in society is but examined and enquired into; for, in the first place, it cannot be alledged that any of them was ever yet charged with being concern'd in the street robberies, and other disorders so much

complain'd of in and about this great city of late ; and then, if we will but condescend to look into their monthly clubs, and observe their private Orders or Rules that are strictly kept up amongst them, of all the innumerable societies in London of this nature, few or none will be found to exceed them in decorum, either with respect to Religion, Loyalty, or Humanity, and true Christian Charity. Nevertheless these poor inoffensive and innocent men, have been so harass'd and cruelly treated within these few months past, that, to avoid such intolerable oppression, some have betaken themselves to sea, by entering voluntarily on board the ships of war and privateers, and great numbers have quite abandon'd all business in town, and retired into different parts of the country, to prevent the prevailing tho' inhuman practice of late, in impressing such poor men for recruits, or putting them arbitrarily to hard labour in a gaol, for no other assignable reason but to sooth the capricious humours of a few purse-proud artificers, who assume to themselves the haughty title of masters.

“ Under these heavy misfortunes, and next to inconceivable distress, the remaining part of these poor industrious tradesmen have no manner of resource but to make their humble application, this next ensuing Sessions, to a British Parliament for protection and redress ; for, notwithstanding the many malicious insinuations, and downright false reports wherewith a few of the master taylors have very lately most impudently attempted to impose upon the town, and to mislead their superiors, the poor inoffensive journeymen are not only willing,

but earnestly desire it may be strictly enquired into and put to any test, whether in all their meetings of any kind together, as well as in private life and conversation, they have not always strictly maintain'd and profess'd unshaken loyalty and fidelity to his most sacred Majesty King George, and the Protestant succession, as by law established, in his Royal Family ; shewing at the same time, with humility, a most dutiful respect and submission to their superiors, and a just regard to moral honesty in opposition to vice, and whatever is inconsistent or destructive of Christian society. Wherefore it is most humbly hoped and pray'd that all good people of circumstances and condition, as in consideration of this their deplorable case, find it to be a matter that truly concerns publick liberty and the just rights of a free people, will be pleased out of charity to the poor men, and a gracious good will to mankind, to contribute a small matter towards the charges and needful expence of a proper application for the redress of this National grievance, by sending any thing, whatever they please, to be left with Mr. John Pearson, at the Seven Stars, in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden ; where all receipts shall be carefully accounted for."

“A LETTER TO A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LIBERTY; TOWARDS ENJOYING THE NATIONAL BENEFIT OF ANY USEFUL BRANCH OF MANUFACTURES, &c.

*London, Printed for the Author, 1745.*¹

“SIR,—There is no incident whatever, can inspire one more with the love of virtue, than that irresistible deference and respect we must always have to those who naturally chuse to walk in that path, without any unbecoming self-interest or affectation.

“The humanity and good-nature wherewith you was pleased to express yourself, on the subject of the poor *Journeymen taylors’ humble petition and complaint*, gave rise to the above reflection; and that instant led me to consult two or three books, on the subject of commerce, and the due care which in all well-regulated societies ought to be taken, in order to prevent giving the rich too great opportunities of oppressing the poor.

“From this kind of study, I had occasion to observe, that in all countries whose riches chiefly depend on the plentiful manufactory of their own

¹ London, 1745, 31 pp. 8vo. I am indebted for permission to reprint this letter to Professor H. S. Foxwell, who possesses, so far as I know, the only copy extant.

plentiful product, the laws must have an especial regard to the increase of people; and consequently to the protection and maintenance of the poor and meaner sort, on whom chiefly these manufacturies must depend.

“For if we take an impartial view of the course of national trade, and penetrate into the true causes of the rise and fall of the price of the several manufacturies whereof it is composed, it will plainly appear, that in the *Woollen Trade*, for example, it is the clothier, and the labouring poor employ’d by him, and not the woollen draper, taylor, or intermediate dealer in cloth, on whom the market price, or value of that commodity depends; the profit gain’d by the retailer, or intermediate dealer, being rather a burthen upon the sale of that manufactory, which is taken from the sheep’s back, raised and brought to perfection, in every shape, by the poor labourers, under the clothiers’ direction.¹

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“These examples, Sir, I must own, made so great an impression on me, that I could not resist sending for some of the most intelligent amongst the *journeymen taylors*, from whom I might be particularly inform’d of all the circumstances of their case; and on a very strict enquiry, I found it plainly to stand as follows, viz.:—

“That the business of a master taylor being very

¹ Here follow some twelve pages to prove that various countries have lost important branches of manufacture owing to the oppression of the labourers, which caused them to flee to other countries, &c., &c.

precarious ; sometimes very full of work, at others nothing at all to do ; the master taylors, in order to be secure of having a sufficient number of journeymen always ready to answer their occasions, did long ago, amongst themselves, contrive to encourage the journeymen to assemble daily at certain publick houses of call, from whence they could, at a minute's warning, be supply'd by the master of the house, with any number of journeymen they wanted ; but then, as great numbers of these poor men were so employ'd, perhaps only two days in a week, and very rarely above the half of their whole time ; yet nevertheless were necessarily obliged to be at a continual expence of eating and drinking at their respective houses of call, it was impracticable for them, especially such as had wives and children, to subsist on such small wages as the master taylors wanted them to be reduced to, unless we could suppose they were constantly to be employ'd throughout the year ; in which case it is allow'd, that what is commonly call'd *the Statute wages* would, with respect to a bare maintenance, not only go as far, but further than what the journeymen themselves propose, on the precarious foot of being but accidentally, or rarely employ'd as above.

“ From this matter of fact it evidently appears, that the wages of thirty-pence per day, expected by the journeymen, and for the most part allow'd by the generality of the best master taylors, was not demanded, as it has been pretended, in a mutinous manner, or with any view to raise the price of that sort of work, but on the contrary, from a simple and absolute necessity of providing a bare maintenance

for these poor labourers, and very hard-working men, whose eye-sight is thereby so greatly impair'd, as to fail by the time they attain the age of forty years.

“And with respect to what the master taylor's alledge, that they cannot afford out of their small profits, to allow thirty pence per day to their journeymen, pretending that such wages must necessarily raise the price of their work, I find the poor journeymen very modestly only desire that gentlemen will be pleased to satisfy themselves in that point, by examining the following articles in a master taylor's bill, as they stand commonly charged to the nobility and gentry of this kingdom ; distinguishing the clear profit arising to the master taylor, even on supposition he is permitted to allow his journeymen thirty-pence per day.

“ I likewise found there were some other considerable articles of profit accruing to the master taylors, not inserted in the above bill ; but the journeymen then with me, very earnestly begg’d, in behalf of their poor brethren, that they might not be made the instruments of any envious accusation ; for that they only desired to be put into a bare capacity of living with common freedom, and did not at all take upon them to judge of their masters’ profits ; yet in justice to the public, I cannot omit taking notice of one very intolerable abuse, I had then occasion to be inform’d of ; and that is, the frequent most scandalous and clandestine importation of gold and silver thread buttons, laces and brocades from France, charged by the master taylors to their customers, at a most exorbitant profit on the prime cost.

“ But we come now to the second and last part of these poor freemen’s complaint, which is still more material than all that has yet been said, because it immediately affects the liberty of all the commons of Britain, tending to destroy the ancient Gothick constitution of this Realm ; for when it comes to appear in the course of those malicious prosecutions now depending before the Court of King’s Bench,¹ and which have been too wantonly carried on at the prodigal expence of the master taylors, against numbers of their poor journeymen, that even some of the Magistrates or Justices of the Peace, as well as constables of the night, have been largely bribed with money, paid by the master taylors, purely for taking into custody all the jour-

¹ No report of any such cases appears to have been preserved.

neymen taylors they could find, in order to have them impress'd for recruits, or sent to Houses of Correction; and if enquired into, when it comes likewise to appear, that of late it has been the common practice of several master taylors, supported by the authority of two or more Justices of the Peace, to come with a constable at their backs into the habitation of a poor journeyman taylor, while he was employed at home for the needful support of his family, and on his, the journeyman's, refusal to leave his work and his home immediately, and go along with the master taylor into his service, tho' perhaps it was only for one day, he shall be forthwith dragged to a House of Correction, there to remain for the space of two months.

"When these things, I say, on a proper enquiry, come to appear before a House of Parliament, may we not humbly presume it will be adjudged, that the Law, under colour of which such things have been done, is certainly misconstrued and grossly misapplied; and if so, will not every member who has any feeling at his heart, for the ancient constitution and liberties of his country, be alarmed lest the same unaccountable severities which have been so lately practised on this particular set of poor labourious manufacturers, should by the like means be gradually extended to others, since it is impossible to assign any reasons for supporting such a conduct in this case, but what will be equally applicable to every other species of manufacture that depends on the labouring poor.

"The very first appearance of exercising such acts of inhumanity and cruelty on the innocent poor

laborious subject in a free country, is really shocking; but the unhappy consequences on a supposition that they are to be multiplied and continued, are dreadful; wherefore I could not resist laying the whole matter plainly before a gentleman of your impartial and generous way of thinking; being well assured, from the indefatigable pains you daily bestow with pleasure in your country's service, that nothing in your power will be wanting, either to rectify any material grievance wherewith the poor labouring subject is oppressed, or in any shape to promote the trading interest and public good of the nation; a conduct which naturally and irresistibly draws from every honest and good man, the esteem and respect that will always be due to such merit.—I have the honour to be, Sir, yours, &c.

“FINIS.

“POSTSCRIPT.

“It may be observed in life, that we often neglect to consider or reflect on the consequences of many things custom has made familiar to us; such as, for example, the common practice of sending for a master taylor, not only to take measure in order to fit you with a suit of cloaths, but you at the same time give him unlimited commission to purchase a great variety of materials wanting, and to charge for every article besides the fashion, what he thinks fit, unto which account seldom or never any scrutiny or objection is made, especially by men of rank and fortune: And to this sort of indolence or neglect is owing, in a great measure, those exorbitant imposi-

tions daily put on mankind, by even the richest and most turbulent of these masters, many of whom, and particularly the proudest, would, I am very confident on trial, be found to have very small pretensions to the capacity of good hands for any fine work themselves; all the elegance of that kind, depending wholly on the genius and careful industry of the journeymen, together with the skill and address of the finisher or foreman.

“But supposing that any discreet and prudent nobleman, or gentleman, should take the resolution of adding to the number of his servants, only one sufficient journeyman taylor, to perform all the work of that kind wanted in the family, at the same time directing his steward to furnish all the materials for this workman at the first hand, it would soon evidently appear how considerably he must save in expence, and also how much better he would be served in every respect; for it is in fact the journeymen, and not the masters, who are the artificers as well as labourers in that trade or calling; and therefore to permit such a multitude of poor labourious men, to be starved, and grievously oppressed by only a few purse-proud idle pretenders either to ingenuity or labour, is far from being consistent with reason or good sense; and this will still appear in a stronger light, if it be considered simply that to give these poor journeymen their natural freedom to serve any nobleman or gentleman who desires to employ them, without incurring the severe penalty of being impressed or sent to a prison, is all that they most humbly pray for and expect.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.”

THE PETITION OF THE MASTER TAYLORS
AND STAY-MAKERS, RESIDING WITHIN THE
CITY AND LIBERTY OF WESTMINSTER, JANUARY,
1752.¹

“ A PETITION of the master taylors and stay-makers, residing within the city and liberty of Westminster, liberties thereof, and vicinages of the same, commonly called the Bills of Mortality, whose names are thereunto subscribed, for and on behalf of themselves, and other the master taylors and stay-makers within the same, was presented to the House and read ; setting forth, That by an act made in the 7th year of his late Majesty King George (intituled, an act for regulating the journeymen taylors, within the Weekly Bills of Mortality) it is, amongst other things, enacted, That all contracts, &c., between taylors for advancing their wages, or lessening the usual hours of work, are illegal, null, and void ; and that journeymen taylors, offending against the same Act, shall be committed to the workhouse or common gaol, for any time not exceeding two months ; that the time limited for journeymen taylors to work, is from six in the morning till eight at night, the

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, January 17, 1752, vol. xxvi. pp. 376, 377. From December 1751 the House of Commons adopted the new style of dating its year from January to December. The year 1752, therefore, is here correct.

master allowing $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. a day for breakfast, and one hour for dinner, and every journeyman to be paid $2/$ *per diem*, from the 25th of March to the 24th of June, and $1/8$ *per diem*, for the rest of the year; and it is further enacted, for the reasons in the said act contained, that the Justices for London and Westminster, at their Quarter Sessions, upon application, may alter the wages and hours of work; and persons paying more than the wages aforesaid, shall forfeit £5; and further, setting forth, That the petitioners have been always willing to comply with the said Act, and conform themselves in every particular to the contents thereof; but are now, and have been for some years past, at times, threatened and terrified, and abused, by the journey-men taylors, for such their compliance, in a riotous and tumultuous manner, in open and contemptuous violation of the said law, and the authority of the same, and have been obliged, at different times, to apply to His Majesty in Council, and to the subordinate civil power, at very great expence, for protection and redress; and that, particularly last summer, the petitioners appealed to the Quarter Sessions of the County of Middlesex, to ascertain and settle the wages of their journeymen; whereupon, after consideration and hearing of counsel, an order was made to allow the journeymen $2/$ per day, during the winter half-year, and $2/6$ per day, during the summer half-year; with which order the journeymen seemed to be satisfied till the Michaelmas following, when they rose in great numbers, and, in a riotous manner, demanded $2/6$ per day, contrary to the said order; and that,

upon this, the journeymen of the City of London, seeing what advantage their brethren at Westminster had obtained under the said order, whereby they were to be paid advanced wages for one half of the year, contrary to all practice, and to the directions of the said Act of Parliament, were encouraged to apply to the general Quarter Sessions in the City of London, held after Michaelmas last, to have their wages advanced, and the hours of their work lessened; whereupon the court ordered their wages to be settled at 2/ a day for three quarters of the year, and 2/6 for the remaining quarter, and at the same time took off one hour in every day from the time of working; and that upon this, the journeymen of Westminster, observing the variance between the said orders, have now this last Christmas presumed to apply again to the Quarter Sessions for the County of Middlesex, to advance their wages still higher, and to lessen the hours of work; which petition is now depending; and that the petitioners, vexed with the proceedings of the said journeymen, and seeing no end of these disturbances and litigations, have found it necessary to resort to the House for redress; and alledging, that the petitioners have, for many reasons, found the said Act of Parliament insufficient for their relief; and that, notwithstanding the aid of that law, they have not been able to curb the insolence, or suppress the riots, of the said journeymen taylor, or prevent them from extorting larger wages than their labour deserveth, to the disquiet of the publick peace, and the evil example of all journeymen and labourers in other branches of trade

and business : And therefore praying, that the House would take the premises under their consideration, that the said Act may be amended, that the wages and hours of work may be ascertained ; and that some one court may be appointed finally to determine any difference which may arise in both cities ; and grant the petitioners such other relief in the premises, as to the House shall seem meet."

“THE CASE OF THE JOURNEYMEN TAYLORS
AND JOURNEYMEN STAYMAKERS, RE-
SIDING WITHIN THE CITIES OF LONDON AND
WESTMINSTER, AND WEEKLY BILLS OF MOR-
TALITY.¹

“BY an Act of Parliament made in the Seventh Year of his late Majesty's Reign, intituled, *An Act for Regulating the Journeymen Taylors within the Weekly Bills of Mortality*, it is enacted, that from and after the first day of May, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Twenty-one, the hours of work for all journeymen taylors, servants and apprentices to taylors, shall be, from six in the morning until eight at night, excepting only, that there shall be allowed one peny halfpeny a day for breakfast, and one hour for dinner; and for the said hours of work there shall be paid unto every journeyman taylor, from the twenty-fifth of March to the twenty-fourth of June, any sum not exceeding two shillings *per diem*, and for the rest of the year one shilling and eightpence *per diem*.

“And, by the said Act, the Justices of the Peace within the limits aforesaid, at their Quarter-Sessions,

¹ London, 4 pp. fol., N.D. Presented to the House of Commons 28th January 1752; see *ante*, pp. xxxviii. I am indebted for permission to reprint this petition to Professor H. S. Foxwell, who possesses the only copy of which I am aware.

are authorized to take into consideration the plenty or scarcity of the time, and other circumstances, and alter the wages and hours of work aforesaid ; and all taylor's, and their journeymen, are to observe the same under pain of imprisonment, not exceeding two months, being lawfully convicted of such offence, before the Justices of the Peace, after knowledge or information of such alterations, upon any prosecution to be commenced within six days after the offence committed.

" The said Act of Parliament was obtained upon application of the Master Taylors in London and Middlesex ; and the Legislature, foreseeing it would be necessary thereafter to alter the journeymen's wages and hours of work, therefore vested a power in the said Justices for that purpose.

" Since the making the said Act, the price of labour, and wages, in most trades and businesses, are much increased, occasioned by the dearness of provisions and other accidents ; whereof the Master Taylors were so sensible, that the greatest part and most eminent among them for several years last past, have paid their journeymen two shillings and sixpence a day all the year.

" The Justices of the Peace in London and Middlesex, at their respective general Quarter-Sessions of the Peace, have, upon the application as well of the said Master-Taylor's, as of their journeymen, made several alterations as to the said journeymen's wages, and their hours of work.

" From Midsummer, until some time after Michaelmas, in every year, the journeymen taylor's in general have little or no work, and are not employed in the

whole, above thirty-two weeks in the year ; which, at 2/6 a day, doth not exceed, one week with another, 9/ a week : Which any gentleman may be convinced of, who will be pleased to consider, that master-taylors who employ at some times in the year twenty or thirty men, at other times have but eight or ten, and sometimes none : And as for the number of men in the said business, any gentleman may be satisfied thereof, who will but consider that the mourning occasioned by the melancholy death of His Royal Highness the late Prince of Wales was completed, both as to town and country orders, in three weeks' time ; and even tradesmen were served in one month.

“Many Master Taylors, in order to have their work done cheap, get a great number of young, raw, and unexperienced lads out of the country, who, for better instructions, are glad to work at low prices ; and, by such means, great numbers of the best and most experienced journeymen taylors are forced to go into all parts of the kingdom, to the great prejudice of themselves, their wives and children ; whereby the business is not so well done as formerly in London and Westminster ; and the trade every year declines through the avarice of some Master-Taylors, who, the more effectually to facilitate their encroachments on the journeymen's labour, most fallaciously insinuate that they only want to be relieved from being obliged to pay 2/6 a day to every journeyman, if ever so bad a workman ; a necessity they never laboured under : And the journeymen humbly submit it to the consideration of every impartial person, whether (considering the

great variety in the genius of men) it is not impracticable, or at least very inequitable, by any positive law to put an equal value on every man's labour; and more especially to put such a restriction on one particular business only. But, even supposing a necessity for it, the rate must be proportioned according to the merits of that part of the trade called workmen; otherwise there would be no room for improvement, no encouragement for emulation, no need for endeavours to excel; under which disadvantages the trade must unavoidably droop and decay, to its utter ruin. Indeed, it may be said, what must they do that are not workmen? To that we may justly answer, that there is no law to hinder such from agreeing with masters according to their merit: And it would be a greater danger and injury to the trade, to cramp it by depriving workmen of their deserts.

“The hours of work, in most handicraft trades, are from six in the morning till six at night: But the journeymen tailors and staymakers hours of work exceed that time by two hours; and in the winter-time they work for many hours by candlelight; which is from six till after eight in the morning, which is above two hours, and from four till eight in the afternoon, which is four hours more; which is, in the whole, above six hours in a day; and oftentimes on black work, and also on gold and silver holes, which very much strains the strongest eyes; and, by sitting so many hours in such a position, almost double on the shopboard, with their legs under them, and poring so long over their work by candlelight, their spirits are exhausted, nature is

wearied out, and their health and sight are soon impaired; insomuch that many, in the prime of their years, are become despised by their masters, by reason their sight is decayed, and they cannot see to work so well as others: Which is occasioned by their sitting in such a position, and working so long by candlelight, as is done by them, and by no other trade whatever that requires the sight of the eyes, as the poor journeymen taylor's do: And, in order to get bread for themselves and families, the poor miserable wretches are obliged to work for masters at an under price; and, as there is a great uncertainty of work, a poor journeyman often changes his master, and frequently has a mile, or a mile and a half or more to go to work; therefore must rise at five in the morning to be at his work by six; and at night cannot get home much before nine: So that a poor married man can have little comfort with his wife and children.

“And it is humbly hoped, by the said poor distressed journeymen, that the wages of 2/6 a day, which they have received these seven or eight years, will not be now thought too much, considering they do not work above thirty-two weeks in the year; which doth not amount to more than 9/ a week throughout the year: And if the same is not settled at that rate, their families must starve, or go to the parish, as can be plainly made appear by the following estimate of a journeyman taylor's expences, for himself only, for one week, besides cloaths for himself and family, and sickness, and other incident charges.

"For breakfast, more than the master's allowance	o	o	0½
For meat, drink and bread for dinner	o	o	6
On the shopboard, in the afternoon, a pint of beer	o	o	1½
Bread, cheese and beer for supper	o	o	3
<hr/>			
One day's expences	o	o	11
Sunday's expence	o	1	o
The other five days' expence	o	4	7
Lodging for a week	o	1	o
Washing for a week	o	o	8
Shaving for a week	o	o	4
<hr/>			
	o	8	6
<hr/>			

"The profits of the trade are very considerable; for a master taylor, by forty men working six days, gains (at a moderate calculation) fifty pounds; and so more or less, in proportion to the number of men they employ: And several of them, who have begun the world with little or nothing, have become rich in a few years, as may appear by their opulent way of living, their country-houses, their chariots, chaises, saddle-horses and footmen: Their pleasures are such as persons of fortune enjoy:¹ And all these raised and supported by the industry of the poor journey-men: Yet such masters will not pay the poor men what they justly deserve for the labour by which

¹ This does not appear to have been an exaggeration, for in the curious old play of "The Tailors; a tragedy for warm weather" (see *ante*, pp. xl.-xli.), we find in Act ii., Scene 1, a description of one of the master tailors who is made to possess—

"A Country house at Lambeth Marsh, genteely furnish'd."

Later in the same scene his wife is said to enjoy—

"A country house and town, and one horse chaise,
White conduit house, and every joy beside;"

and not to envy the wives of those other masters who drive two horses, and are attended by liveried servants.

they themselves are supported in the most plentiful enjoyment of the blessings of life.

"Altho' the master taylors may insinuate great losses by bad debts in their business ; if that is true, they must have a wonderful and mysterious way of growing rich : For it is well known, that any one of them very seldom fails, or becomes a bankrupt (as too often happens in other trades) ; unless it be some unthinking young beginner, that neglects his business to pursue his pleasures.

"At a moderate computation, there are 1,000 master taylors, and master staymakers in London, Westminster, and Middlesex, within the Weekly Bills of Mortality ;¹ and the greatest part of them, for seven years past, until Michaelmas last, have given 2/6 a day to their journeymen all the year ; which they did not grudge to pay them : For it is but reasonable that they should pay the same wages in the dead seasons of the year, as at other times ; their customers paying the same price for cloaths at all times.

"Amongst such a large body of men as the journeymen taylors, some of them may have been guilty of misbehaviour ; but without the knowledge or consent of the generality of them, who have been

¹ This seems a very large number, but there is some evidence that it was not an exaggeration. In "The universal director ; or, the nobleman's and gentleman's true guide to the masters and professors of the liberal and polite arts and sciences ; and of the mechanic arts, manufactures and trades," &c., &c. by T. Mortimer, London, 1743, 8vo, only sixteen names of tailors are given, the author adding that, "Out of an almost incredible list, I have selected the following, being the principal masters in the different parts of the town." Ed. 1743 (Guildhall Lib.). Ed. 1763 (Brit. Mus., 10,349, c. 3).

so far from assembling in a tumultuous manner, that they always were and are desirous to have such offenders punished.

“The oppression of masters, in fixing the price of labour too low, and forcing the poor labouring men to work at certain wages, has, in many instances, obliged them to fly to other countries; and, by that means, *Spain* lost the manufacture of making cloths, and the same was transferred to *England*, to the great and inestimable advantage thereof.

“And it is universally known, that most master taylors in *London* and *Middlesex* are more beholden to their men (in several material branches of their business) than to their own genius: Therefore it is humbly hoped, that their wages will be fixed at 2/6 a day, and the hours of work from six in the morning till six at night; which will make the half-day more equal: For the masters often take an advantage of the poor journeymen, as it now stands, by letting them play in the morning, and calling them to work in the afternoon; whereby the master gains an hour more in labour in the afternoon, than he would by the morning’s work, besides saving one penny half-penny for breakfast, which the masters allow; which makes an advantage of four-pence in the half-day in the afternoon on the master’s side: For which reasons, it is hoped, that the wages and hours of work will be fixed as above; which will enliven the trade, enable the poor journeymen to support themselves and families, and be conducive to the welfare, benefit and advantage of all persons concerned therein.”

THE PETITION OF THE MASTER TAYLORS
OF LONDON AND ITS VICINITY.*December 1767.*¹

“ A PETITION of the several persons, whose names are thereunto subscribed, being a Committee appointed by the whole body of Master Taylors, residing within the City of London, and some miles round the same, in behalf of themselves and the rest of the said body, was presented to the House, and read ; Setting forth, that an Act, made in the 7th year of the reign of King George the First, for regulating the journey-men taylors within the weekly Bills of Mortality, is found to be in several respects defective, and has not answered the good purposes thereby intended ; and that the petitioners apprehend, that proper provision should be made for regulating the master taylors, and their journeymen, within the City of London, and five miles round the same, wherein the interests of both should be considered ; by which means the differences and disputes, which so frequently happen between them, to the great detriment and interruption of the trade, and to the impoverishment of many, might be prevented : And therefore praying, That leave may be given to bring in a Bill for those purposes, under such Rules, Directions, and Restrictions, as the House shall think proper.”

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 7th December 1767, vol. xxxi. p. 483.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE
OF COMMONS UPON THE PETITION OF THE
MASTER TAYLORS OF LONDON, &c.¹

January 1768.

“SIR ROBERT LADBROKE reported from the Committee, to whom the petition of the several persons, whose names are thereunto subscribed, being a Committee appointed by the whole body of Master Taylors residing within the City of London, and some miles round the same, in behalf of themselves, and the rest of the said body, was referred, That the Committee had examined the matter of the said petition; and had directed him to report the same, as it appeared to them, to the House; and he read the Report in his place; and afterwards delivered it in at the clerk’s table: Where the same was read; and is as followeth; viz.

“To prove the allegations of the said petition, an Act, made in the Seventh Year of the reign of King George the First, for regulating the journeymen taylors within the Weekly Bills of Mortality, was read, whereby it appeared, that prosecutions for offences were to be commenced within six days after the offence committed, and all prosecutions to be heard before the Session. And,

“Mr. John Morgan, being examined, said, that he

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 22nd January 1768, vol. xxxi. p. 535.

had applied to five Justices at one and the same time, on complaint against the master taylor for not complying with the Act; and, upon examining into the Act, they unanimously resolved that the Act was insufficient so as to give relief; and refused to act under it; and that the witness had made several applications of the same nature, but could get no relief.

“Mr. William Davis, and Mr. Thomas Racket, being severally examined, said, that several master taylor have evaded the Act by taking houses at *Mary le bone*, and other places out of the Bills of Mortality, out of the limits prescribed by the Act.

“And both the said witnesses further said, that they have, in conversation, heard master taylor say, that they have carried their work and workmen out of the Bills of Mortality, by which means neither the Justices nor the King’s Bench could touch them; by that means they give larger wages, and, in times of hurry can get journeymen from other masters, which gives those masters advantage in trade, and have got customers from them: And that the Act is insufficient to prevent the above grievances, and in several other respects ineffectual to answer the purposes thereby intended.”

“AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT TO AMEND AN ACT
MADE IN THE SEVENTH YEAR OF KING GEORGE
THE FIRST, INTITULED, ‘AN ACT FOR REGULAT-
ING THE JOURNEYMEN TAYLORS WITHIN THE
WEEKLY BILLS OF MORTALITY.’¹

“WHEREAS, by an Act made in the seventh year of the reign of his late majesty King George the First, intituled, An Act for regulating the journeymen taylors within the weekly Bills of Mortality; power is given to the justices of the peace, at their general quarter sessions, within the limits the said Act mentioned, from time to time, upon application being made to them for that purpose, to take into consideration the plenty or scarcity of the times, and other circumstances, and thereupon to alter and regulate the wages, and other allowances, directed by the said Act to be paid and made to, and the hours of work of journeymen taylors and servants retained or employed in the art or mystery of a taylor, within their respective jurisdictions; and also to punish all persons not complying with the terms of the said Act, or of such rules and regulations, in manner the said Act mentioned: And whereas, by virtue of the power aforesaid, the justices of the peace, at their general

¹ 8 Geo. III. c. 17, 1768.

quarter sessions, within the City of London and County of Middlesex, respectively, have, from time to time, made orders, rules, and regulations, with respect to the hours of working, and the wages and allowances to be paid and made to journeymen taylors, and others, as aforesaid; but doubts and difficulties having arisen, touching the prosecution of persons offending against the said Act, or against the said rules, orders, and regulations, the due execution of the said Act hath been greatly obstructed: And whereas, it is necessary that the said Act should in some other respects be explained and amended: May it therefore please Your Majesty, &c.”¹

¹ It is unnecessary to reprint the whole of this lengthy Act of Parliament. The following is a brief analysis of its provisions.

Clause 1 declares that from and after March 25, 1768, the hours of labour of servants or journeymen taylors in the City of London, or within five miles thereof, shall be from 6 A.M. to 7 P.M., with one hour only for refreshment; and that the wages should be any sum not exceeding 2s. 7½d. per day, except during one calendar month from the publication in the *London Gazette* of an order for general mourning, when the wages should be any sum not exceeding 5s. 1½d. per day.

Clause 2 provides that if any master shall give, or any journeyman receive more than the sum stated, upon conviction before two justices, either by confession of the party or upon the oath of a credible witness, in a prosecution commenced not more than three months after the offence was committed, shall be liable to imprisonment in the common gaol, with hard labour, for any time not less than fourteen days nor more than two months.

Clause 3 empowers the justices to issue summonses, and require the attendance of any clerk or other person whom they think likely to be able to give evidence in any case under this Act, and to issue warrants for the arrest, and to commit to prison any witness so summoned who fails to appear, &c.

Clause 4 explains that under the Act 7 Geo. I. c. 13, it has not been impossible for different rates of wages to be fixed by the

justices within the City of London, and those of Westminster and the Weekly Bills of Mortality, a course which would be highly inconvenient and prejudicial to the public. In order, therefore, that one just and reasonable rate of wages may in future prevail throughout London and five miles round, it is provided that the Mayor, Aldermen, and Recorder of the City of London shall be empowered to alter and regulate from time to time the hours and wages of journeymen tailors throughout the City of London and five miles round.

Clause 5 provides that any alteration or regulation so made shall be advertised at least three times in two daily papers in London or Westminster before it shall be deemed that due notice of the alteration has been given.

Clause 6 provides that nothing in the Act shall be construed to apply to tailors who are *bona fide* employed as foremen ; nor to prevent the payment of extra wages not exceeding 6d. per hour in times of general mourning, and 3d. per hour in ordinary times for over work beyond the hours fixed by the Act or the justices.

Clause 7 provides that if any master tailor residing or inhabiting within the limits aforesaid shall employ any workpeople out of or beyond the limits aforesaid with intent to evade this Act, and shall give such servants more wages than allowed by the Act, he shall for such offence be liable to a fine of £500 for every such offence.

Clause 8 provides that any person convicted by two justices, as provided in Clause 2, shall have power to appeal to the Court of Quarter Sessions.

It will be seen that the chief amendments made to the Act of 1721 are—(1) the reduction of the working day by one hour ; (2) the raising of the wages from 1s. 9½d. per day for nine months, and 2s. 1½d. per day for three months of the year, to 2s. 7½d. per day all the year round ; (3) the extension of the area to which the Act applied from that included in the Weekly Bills of Mortality to the City of London and five miles round ; (4) the removal of conflicting areas of jurisdiction for the administration of the Act, and provision that the City of London Court should in future be the sole authority to make regulations for the whole trade ; (5) equalisation of the punishment to either party for breaking the law by giving or receiving greater wages than allowed. In the old Act the employer was liable to be fined £5, and the journeyman was liable to two months' imprisonment with hard labour. The latter punishment is now prescribed for either party convicted of this offence. (6) The special exemption of foremen from the operations of the Act in regard to hours and wages ; (7) and lastly, the provision of a special and severe punishment for employers who

employ persons outside the area included in the Act, in order to evade its provisions.

It does not appear from this that the law was strengthened against the workmen, but rather the contrary. They did not, indeed, petition against this Bill until after it had become law, and then their chief objection to it was that the wages and hours thus fixed were worse for them than those which were already prevailing in the trade generally.

The two Acts remained in force until the repeal of the Combination Laws in 1825, when that of 1768 was repealed entirely, and that of 1721 was repealed, excepting only "so much as related to the recovery of wages, or to journeymen tailors departing from their service or refusing to enter into work or employment." These portions of the Act remained in force until 1867, when the Master and Servant Act of that year was substituted for them. They were finally repealed by the Trade Union Act of 1875.

THE PETITION OF THE JOURNEYMEN
TAYLORS OF LONDON, &c.¹*May 1768.*

“A PETITION of several journeymen taylors, in the cities of London and Westminster, and County of Middlesex, was presented to the House, and read ; Setting forth, That, by an Act, passed in the last session of Parliament, to amend an Act made in the 7th year of King George the First, for regulating the journeymen taylors within the Weekly Bills of Mortality, the petitioners, as well as the masters by whom they are employed, are laid under many hardships and difficulties ; and that the petitioners apprehend that, upon enquiry, it will be found that all of them are out of employment for a great part of the year ; and that the wages stipulated by the said Act are insufficient for the maintenance of them and their families, more especially considering the present high price of provisions, and almost every necessary of life ; and representing to the House that, by the said Act, the master taylors are confined to give the same wages to all journeymen without distinction, which is a great discouragement to such of the petitioners as by their art or industry excel the rest of their

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 18th May 1768, vol. xxxii. p. 14.

brethren in their business, and is equally a hardship upon the masters and the petitioners; and that the petitioners apprehend that, as well by the said Act, as by the Act of the Seventh of George the First, the petitioners are subjected to many inconveniences and hardships unknown to the rest of their fellow subjects: And therefore praying the House to take the premises into consideration; and to grant them such relief as to the House shall seem requisite.

“Ordered, That the said petition do lie upon the table.”

THE PETITION OF THE MASTER TAYLORS
AND STAYMAKERS OF DUBLIN.¹*February 1772.*

“A PETITION of the Master Taylors and Staymakers of the City of Dublin, was presented to the House, and read, setting forth, That great numbers of journeymen taylors and staymakers, in and about the said city, and others who have served apprenticeships, or have been brought up in the art or mystery of a taylor, have lately departed from their services, without just cause, and have entered into combinations to advance their wages to unreasonable prices, and lessen their usual hours of work, which manifestly tends to the prejudice of trade, to the encouragement of idleness, and to the great increase of the poor of this metropolis. That the source of these disorders principally arises from Clubs and Societies, formed and held in different parts of the said city, where Associations are entered into, Oaths administered, and other illegal acts committed, which if not timely prevented may be productive of very ill consequences. That by such Associations the petitioners are compelled to submit to such arbitrary regulations as the said journeymen shall think proper to impose, insomuch that the petitioners are obliged

¹ The Journals of the House of Commons for the Kingdom of Ireland, 18th February 1772, vol. viii. part 1.

to pay the same wages to the most skilful and to the most ignorant, without any regard being had to the merit, ingenuity, or industry of such journeymen : That the present uncertain rates of wages to be paid to journeymen of the said trade, as well as the difficulty of executing some parts of the several Laws heretofore passed in this Kingdom for preventing unlawful combinations, are (among others) the causes of the many difficulties the petitioners labour under : And praying leave to lay their grievances before the House, in hopes they will be pleased to take them under consideration, and to remedy the same, as to the House shall seem most proper.

“Ordered, That the said petition be referred to the consideration of a Committee, and that they do examine the matter thereof, and report the same, with their opinion thereupon, to the House.

“And a committee was appointed of the Marquis of Kildare, Doctor Clement, and others, or any three or more of them, and they are to meet to morrow morning, nine of the clock, in the Speaker’s Chamber, and they have power to adjourn from time to time, and place to place, and to send for persons and papers, and all members who come are to have voices.”

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS UPON THE
PETITION OF THE MASTER TAYLORS AND
STAYMAKERS OF DUBLIN.¹

February 1772.

“THE Marquis of Kildare reported from the Committee to whom the petition of the Master Taylors and Staymakers of the City of Dublin was referred, the Resolutions of the Committee thereupon, which he read in his place, and after delivered in at the table, where the same were read, and agreed to by the House, and are as follow :—

“*Resolved*, That it appears to this Committee, that a great number of journeymen taylors have entered into unlawful combinations, and established Rules to be observed, under severe penalties, by all the members combining, in order to raise their wages, and established every month a watch word in the military form.

Resolved, That all such combinations, as set forth in the petition, are prejudicial to the trade of this city, and tend to the encouragement of idleness, and to the great increase of the poor of this Kingdom.

“*Resolved*, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the petitioners have fully proved the allegations of their petition, and that they deserve the aid of Parliament.”

¹ Journals of the House of Commons for the Kingdom of Ireland, 25th February 1772, vol. viii. Part 1.

“AN ACT FOR REGULATING THE JOURNEY-
MEN TAYLORS AND JOURNEYMEN SHIP-
WRIGHTS OF THE CITY OF DUBLIN, AND THE
LIBERTIES THEREOF, AND OF THE COUNTY OF
DUBLIN.¹

“ PREAMBLE.

“ WHEREAS great numbers of journeymen taylor in and about the city of Dublin and liberties thereof, and in and about the County of Dublin, who have served apprenticeships, or have been brought up in the art or mystery of a taylor, have lately departed from their services without just cause, and have entered into combinations to advance their wages to unreasonable prices, and lessen their usual hours of work, which manifestly tends to the prejudice of trade, to the encouragement of idleness, and to the great increase of the poor of this metropolis: and whereas these disorders principally arise from clubs and societies formed and held in different parts of the said city and county of Dublin, where Associations are entered into, Oaths administered, and other illegal acts committed, which if not timely prevented may

¹ The statutes at large passed in the Parliaments held in Ireland, 11 & 12 Geo. III. c. 33, 1771-72, vol. x. p. 323.

be productive of very ill consequences : for remedy wherefore be it enacted," &c.¹

¹ It is unnecessary to reprint the whole of this very lengthy Act, but some brief analysis of its provisions may be given. In the first place it provided a fine of £20, or in default three months' imprisonment in the common gaol, without bail or mainprise, for any one convicted of knowingly permitting such illegal clubs or societies to be held on their premises. Tailors entering into oaths or covenants were to be fined £10, or sent to gaol for three months with hard labour, upon summary conviction before two Justices of the Peace. The hours of labour for tailors in Dublin were fixed, from and after June 1st, 1772, from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M., with an hour off for dinner and half an hour for breakfast. The wages were to be not less than 1s. 4d. nor more than 1s. 8d. per day, according to the skill and ability of the workman. But for three weeks after the publication of orders for general mourning, the wages were to be 2s. 6d. per day. Journeymen working overtime beyond the hours fixed by the Act, or altered by the justices, were to be paid 2d. per hour extra in ordinary times, and 3d. per hour extra in times of general mourning, and the Justices of the Peace in general Quarter Sessions were empowered to alter and amend the hours and rates of wages thus fixed.

It will be seen that this Act bore a very close resemblance to that passed in England for regulating the London tailors some five years earlier, and indeed the Irish Act was probably drafted upon the model of the earlier London one. The Act, together with the general anti-combination law passed by the Irish Parliament in 1729, was repealed by the Combination Act of 1825.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE STRIKE OF THE
TAILORS OF BIRMINGHAM, 1777.¹

[*February 13th, 1777.*—“Wanted immediately. One hundred journeymen taylors, to work piece-work in the town of Birmingham, in the county of Warwick. The wages will be such as to enable a man to get 16/ per week, and upwards upon an average. Apply to William Moystin, No. 130, Moor-Street, Birmingham.”²

“*February 17th, 1777.*—To all Journeymen Taylors. —Whereas the master taylors of this town of Birmingham, have inserted an advertisement in last Thursday’s Paper, for one hundred men to come to work piecework at such prices as, they say, a man can get sixteen shillings per week ; which we the journeymen declare to be false, as we know the prices are stipulated so, that he must be an extraordinary hand that can get twelve shillings per week ; and as our wages have for some time been to some men Fourteen shillings, and to others fifteen and sixteen shillings per week, and that of the masters’ own raising in opposition to each other, and we are at this present

¹ “A Century of Birmingham Life ; or, a Chronicle of Local Events from 1741 to 1841.” Compiled and edited by John Alfred Langford. Vol. i. pp. 225–227. 2 vols., 8vo. Birmingham and London, 1868. Brit. Mus. 2368, e.

² This advertisement and the following documents originally appeared in *Swinney’s Chronicle*.

time all out of work on the occasion ; we hope there are no persons, who know what trade is, that would comply to such arbitrary power, nor come to this town to work under us ; as we can assure the public, that the masters of this town can very well afford to give the above wages :—But they want to gain fortunes out of poor men's labour, being not contented with cent. per cent., as will be made known to the public very soon.—GEORGE HANLEY.”

“ *February 24th, 1777.*

“ EPIGRAM TO THE MASTER TAYLORS.

“ Your proceedings refrain,
 'Twill be labour in vain,
 For hands round the country to hunt !
 Then pray be content
 With a clear cent. per cent.
 And pocket the present affront.”

“ Wanted immediately, in the Town of Birmingham, 40 or 50 Journeymen Taylors to work piece-work ; the wages are such that a good hand can earn 16/ or 18/ per week, and not work more than common hours, and by applying to the under-written masters, may article for constant employ for any time they chuse. The men will not be subject to a House of Call, as none will be employed but such as call at the Masters' Houses, and are free from all combinations.

“ *N.B.*—The above-mentioned masters think it their duty to return their sincere thanks to their customers for their indulgence during the present

dispute; and now inform them they have such a supply of men as to be able to supply their friends on the shortest notice."

"*March 3rd, 1777.*—To all journeymen taylors.—Whereas the master taylors of the town of Birmingham have advertised for fifty or sixty men to come to work at piece-work with them at eight shillings per suit: Be it known to all men, that it is not for want of men to work for them; but the reason is, that the present men do not chuse to work piece-work at all, on account of their late sufferings by it, for instance, a master in this town will keep twelve or fourteen men, when seven or eight could do all his work and have time to spare, so that they do not keep their men, but starve them; we the present journeymen, are willing to serve our masters on the same terms as before, which was at day wages, and that of their own raising; but they have bound themselves in a bond as they say. We therefore hope that no man will act contrary to the present men, as they are all well-wishers to the community, and can assure them the masters can well afford to give the same wages they have done for some time past; and they also say that the men shall not be subject to a House of Call, but it is well known that a House of Call has been an ancient custom, both in London and in all other capital towns in this Kingdom, for our trade, and that it is more to the master's advantage than a man's; but our masters want to impoverish us by an arbitrary power, so that we cannot support our families, and we the journeymen do not chuse to submit to it, which is the cause of the present dispute. We are, gentlemen, Your

humble servants, the journeymen taylors of the Town of Birmingham.—HENRY EVANS," &c.

"*March 24th, 1777.*—To the public of the Town of Birmingham and the country adjacent.—Whereas the master taylors of this town have advertised for a number of hands to come to work piece-work for them at such prices as they may chuse to give; and their late men have suffered so much by it for many years past, that they do not chuse to work piece-work at all. And as many of the capital masters have chose to employ unexperienced country lads, rather than good workmen which they were supplied with, (and that in justice they cannot deny) for which reason, We, the under-mentioned men, late servants to those masters, desirous that the public may not be imposed on, have taken this method to inform their friends and the public, that they intend carrying on the above trade in all its various branches. Those ladies and gentlemen who please to favour us with their commands, may depend on having their orders completed in the newest fashion, at the shortest notice, and on the most reasonable terms, by their most humble servants, the under-mentioned persons."

"*N.B.*—All journeymen who come to this town, are desired to apply to the House of Call, at the Coach and Horses, in Bell Street, where they will meet with good encouragement.—None but good workmen need apply."¹

¹ "The advertisements both of masters and men are repeated for six weeks, and then without a word as to the results of the dispute the subject drops. No reference was made to it in the paper other than the advertisements mentioned" (Langford).

THE PETITION OF THE MASTER TAYLORS
OF LONDON AND ITS VICINITY.¹*February 1778.*

“A PETITION of the several persons, whose names are thereunto subscribed, being master taylor within the City of London, and within five miles thereof, on behalf of themselves, and other master taylor within the limits aforesaid, was presented to the House, and read; Setting forth, That by two Acts, one made in the 7th year of the reign of King George I., and the other in the 8th year of the reign of his present majesty, several penalties and punishments are inflicted upon master taylor, and other persons exercising the business of a taylor, within the limits of the said Acts, for giving, and upon servants or journeymen in the said business for receiving, any greater wages than by the said Acts are directed; and that it hath been found by experience, that the compelling the petitioners to give the same wages to all the said journeymen indiscriminately is attended with many inconveniences, and tends to prevent emulation amongst the journeymen taylor, and is a great discouragement to all those of superior diligence and abilities in their trade, who, on that account, are frequently

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 3rd February 1778, vol. xxxvi. p. 669.

induced to enter into combinations, and to leave their work, to the great detriment of the petitioners, and disappointment of their customers: And therefore praying the House to take the matter into consideration; and that leave may be given to bring in a Bill for altering and amending the provisions contained in the said Acts, relative to ascertaining and fixing the wages of journeymen taylor, within the city of London, and within five miles thereof, and which inflict penalties and punishments for offences touching the same; or that the petitioners may have such other relief in the premises as to the House shall seem meet.

Ordered, That the said petition be referred to the consideration of a Committee: And that they do examine the matter thereof; and report the same, as it shall appear to them, to the House.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS UPON THE
PETITION OF THE MASTER TAYLORS OF
LONDON, &c.¹

February 1778.

“SIR HERBERT MACKWORTH reported from the Committee to whom the petition of the Master Taylors within the City of London and within five miles thereof, was referred.”

The Committee had examined the two Acts 7 Geo. I., and 8 Geo. III., &c., and

“Mr. George Johnstone, a master taylor, being examined, said, that in pursuance of the said Act of the eighth Year of his present Majesty, the Justices of the Peace at the Quarter Sessions for the City of London, have fixed the wages of journeymen taylor's indiscriminately upon all sorts, from whence great inconveniences have arisen to the masters; for those men, being very unequal in their capacities, it has prevented that emulation which ought to be encouraged amongst them, and also prevents the masters from rewarding men of merit according to their deserts; that, on this account great combinations have been formed, amongst the journeymen, to fix their own wages; and if their demands are not

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 23rd February 1778, vol. xxxvi. p. 727.

immediately complied with, to leave their work, which prevents the masters from executing their orders, and occasions disappointment to their customers.

“And the witness added, That the powers and regulations authorized by the last mentioned Act, are found to be ineffectual, and are attended with great inconveniences.”

“Mr. James Pearce and Mr. John Snell confirmed the above evidence.”

“*Ordered*, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to explain and amend, and reduce into one Act of Parliament, the laws now in being for regulating master and journeymen taylors, within the Bills of Mortality, and within the distance of five miles thereof; And that Sir Herbert Mackworth, and Sir Charles Whitworth do prepare, and bring in the same.”

THE PETITION OF THE MASTER TAYLORS
OF LONDON AND WESTMINSTER, &c.¹*April 1778.*

“ A PETITION of several master taylors, residing within the Cities of London and Westminster, or within five miles thereof, was presented to the House, and read ; taking notice of the Bill to explain and amend, and reduce into one Act of Parliament, the laws now in being for regulating master and journey-men taylors within the Bills of Mortality, and within the distance of five miles thereof ; and setting forth, That the petitioners conceive that the said Bill, so far from answering the good purposes pretended thereby, will be very mischievous, and subject the masters to extortions, misbehaviours, and other inconveniences from the journeymen, will promote combinations amongst the journeymen to demand exorbitant wages, and prevent masters from distinguishing and encouraging merit ; and that the petitioners apprehend the Laws now in being are, and will be, very sufficient for regulating both masters and journeymen, with the following amendments, viz. To allow and compel the party, giving or receiving unlawful wages, to give evidence against the party receiving or giving such wages, and to acquit

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 3rd April 1778, vol. xxxvi. p. 881.

the party giving such evidence of the fact, so far as relates to himself; And therefore praying, That they may be heard, by themselves or counsel, against the said Bill, and that the same may not pass into a law, but that the amendment aforesaid may be made to the Acts now in being, for regulating journeymen taylors.

“Ordered, That the said petition do lie upon the table, until the said Bill be read a second time; and that the petitioners be then heard, by themselves or counsel, against the said Bill, upon their petition, if they think fit.

“Ordered, That Counsel be admitted to be heard, at the same time, in favour of the said Bill, against the said petition.”

"THE KING AGAINST ECCLES.¹*Michaelmas, 1783.*

"THE defendant and six other persons were convicted at the Summer Assizes for Lancaster in the Year 1783, on an indictment, containing two counts, for conspiring to impoverish one H. Booth, a taylor, and to prevent him by indirect means, from carrying on his trade. The indictment had been found at the Quarter Session for the town of Lancaster, and removed by *certiorari* into the King's Bench.

"The first count stated, 'that the defendants together with divers other persons to the jurors unknown, being persons of ill name and fame, and of dishonest conversation, and wickedly devising and intending unjustly, unlawfully and by indirect means, to impoverish one H. Booth, and to deprive and hinder him from using and exercising the trade and business of a taylor, which he used and exercised, on the 28th day of November in the 23rd Year &c., at Liverpool, within the jurisdiction of the Court of Quarter Sessions there, fraudulently, maliciously and unlawfully did confederate, conspire, combine and agree among themselves, by wrongful and indirect means to impoverish the said H. Booth, and to deprive and hinder him from following and

¹ Leach Reports, vol. i. p. 274, c. 136.

exercising his aforesaid business of a taylor in Liverpool aforesaid, and within the jurisdiction aforesaid ; and that the said defendants, together with the said other persons to the jurors unknown, in pursuance of and according to the unlawful conspiracy, combination and agreement aforesaid, on the said 28th day of November, at Liverpool aforesaid and within the jurisdiction aforesaid, indirectly, unlawfully, maliciously and unjustly did prevent and hinder the said H. Booth from following his said trade or business at Liverpool aforesaid, and within the jurisdiction aforesaid ; and thereby did, then and there, greatly impoverish the said H. Booth ; to the great damage of the said H. Booth ; to the evil example &c., and against the peace,' &c. The Second Count stated, ' That the said defendants, together with divers other persons to the jurors unknown, on the said 28th day of November in the 23rd Year aforesaid, at Liverpool aforesaid, and within the jurisdiction aforesaid, wickedly, wrongfully, unlawfully, and maliciously did confederate together, and conspire and agree by indirect means, to prejudice and impoverish the said H. Booth, and to prevent and hinder him the said H. Booth, from using and exercising his aforesaid trade or business of a taylor in Liverpool aforesaid, and within the jurisdiction aforesaid, to the great damage &c., in contempt &c., to the evil &c., and against the peace' &c.

" In the Michaelmas Term following, the defendants were brought up to receive the judgment of the Court ; but

" Chambre and Topping moved that it might be arrested.

“First. The indictment only contains a general charge of conspiracy. It ought to have stated the acts that were committed to impoverish Booth, and prevent him from carrying on his trade, in order that the defendants might thereby have had notice of the particular charges, they were called upon to answer, and that the Court might see that the alleged conspiracy really existed. In the Case of *Rex v. How*, it was determined that an indictment for obstructing a magistrate in the execution of his office, without setting out some act or other, is bad: So in *Rex v. Munoz*, an indictment for procuring a promissory note by false tokens, under pretence of giving the prosecutor the money for it, is held bad for not specifying what the false tokens were. The offence of *Barratry* is the only exception to this rule requiring particular acts to be set out, and there it is only from the necessity of the thing, because of the multiplicity of acts of which that offence consists, and because the words *Communis Barractor* is a term of art, appropriated by the law to this purpose, and even in this case it is said to be a settled practise, not to suffer the prosecutor to go on in the trial of an indictment of this kind, without giving the defendant a note of the particular matters which he intends to prove against him.

“Secondly, that the issue was misjoined, for it is, ‘That the said Eccles and others,’ and only four out of the seven defendants appeared; but this record, in its present form, has the effect of a conviction against them all.

“Lord Mansfield (without hearing the other side). The conspiracy, and the object of it are both stated

in the indictment, but it is contended that *the means* by which the intended mischief was effected, ought also to have been particularly set forth as in the case of *Rex v. Sterling* and others, but this is certainly not necessary, for the offence does not consist in doing the acts by which the mischief is effected, for they may be perfectly indifferent, but in conspiring with a view to effect the intended mischief by any means. The illegal combination is the *gist* of the offence, persons in possession of any articles of trade may sell them at such prices as they individually may please, but if they confederate and agree not to sell them under certain prices, it is conspiracy; so every man may work at what price he pleases, but a combination not to work under certain prices is an indictable offence.—As to the second objection, the defendants all appeared; for upon this record it is added ‘and they each and all of them severally say,’ &c.

“Willes, Justice. All the cases upon this subject were fully considered in the case of *Rex v. Kinnerley*, in which it was decided, that in an indictment for a conspiracy it is not necessary to state the means by which the mischief was effected.

“Buller, Justice. The indictment states, ‘That the defendants intending unlawfully and by *indirect means* to impoverish the prosecutor, unlawfully did conspire,’ &c.; but nothing need have been stated about the means, for the means are matter of evidence to prove the charge, and not the crime itself. The indictment therefore rather states too much than too little. As to the second objection, if in fact the defendants did not all appear, it is a blameable negligence in the clerks of the office, in making

this careless entry, and the remedy must be against them.

“The defendants received judgment of six months’ imprisonment in the gaol of Liverpool.”¹

¹ “An indictment for conspiring to convict another of a *Capital Crime*, and that in pursuit of such conspiracy they did afterwards indict him, is good although it do not charge it to be a conspiracy to indict *falsely*.” *Rex v. Spragge and others*, 2 Burr. Rep. 993. But an indictment will not lie for conspiracy to commit a *civil trespass*. *Rex v. Turner and others*, 13 East’s Term Reports 228, in which case Lord Ellenborough, C.J., said, that the case of *Rex v. Eccles*, was considered as a conspiracy in restraint of trade, and so far a conspiracy to do an unlawful act *affecting the public*. But where two conspire and one dies, the other may still be indicted for the conspiracy. *Rex v. Nicholls*, Mich. 17 Geo. II., cited 13 East’s Term Reports, 412-414.

THE PETITION OF THE MASTER TAYLORS
OF LONDON AND ITS VICINITY.¹*December 1800.*

“ A PETITION of several master taylors, on behalf of themselves and the rest of the master taylors residing within the City of London and five miles thereof, was presented to the House and read: Setting forth that the Acts 7 Geo. 1. and 8 Geo 3. fixed a rate of wages which neither party should exceed, and gave Quarter sessions power to alter and revise the said rate etc. etc.

“ And that an application was, about 25 Years since, made to the Quarter Sessions, in the manner by the said act directed, to settle the wages and allowances to be paid and given to journeymen taylors, and which were accordingly settled at the rate of 18/9 per week, and that no alteration, or Order of Sessions, has been made since, in respect of the said wages and allowances; And that the journeymen taylors have, at several times since the wages were settled as aforesaid, entered into combinations, and struck for an increase of wages, which the petitioners were under the absolute necessity to comply with; and that the wages the journeymen now receive is 25/ per week, and which were obtained in the manner above-stated, and without any

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, 22nd December 1800, vol. 1v. p. 922.

order of Sessions; and that the petitioners, at the several times when the journeymen struck for an increase of wages as aforesaid, gave it them without knowing or conceiving they were thereby incurring the severe punishment inflicted by law, or the petitioners would not have complied therewith, but on the contrary, would have proceeded in the manner directed by law; and that the journeymen tailors in this metropolis, to the number of 15,000 and upwards, have at this time entered into a combination to an alarming degree, and have refused to work unless their respective masters will raise the wages they now receive to 30/ per week; and that the petitioners, being sensible of the illegality of the demand of the journeymen, have unanimously determined not to comply with the same, but intend to compel the journeymen, by a prosecution for a conspiracy; or in such other legal mode as shall be deemed advisable, to return to their work upon receiving such wages, as shall be settled by the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, but are threatened with prosecutions by the said journeymen for having given them greater wages than are allowed by law, in case they do not comply with their present demands; And therefore praying, that leave may be given to bring in a Bill, for indemnifying the petitioners of, from and against, all penalties, forfeitures, and punishments, to which they are now by law liable, or to grant the petitioners such other relief as to the House shall appear proper and expedient.

“Ordered, That the said petition do lie upon the table.”

REPORT, SUBMITTED BY THE MASTER
TAILORS' COMMITTEE, TO THE TRADE AT
LARGE, &C.¹

August 1810.

"SIR,—The following report of the Committee was read at Highbury Tavern on Wednesday, 1st August, 1810, to a large meeting of the trade, convened by public advertisement, and is submitted by them for Your consideration.

"GENTLEMEN,—It will be recollected by many present, that a Committee was appointed on the 25th April last, at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, Strand, to carry certain resolutions, which were then agreed upon, into effect.

"The Committee having pledged themselves by public advertisement, to state to this meeting what has been done by them, and what they, with submission, think ought to be done by the trade in general, beg leave to make a few preliminary observations, on the state of the trade, before they proceed to the more immediate business of the day.

"In consequence of the unprecedented rise of cloth, and of other articles connected with the business, many masters, to retain their customers, were under the necessity of charging a smaller profit on

¹ Fol. 4 pp. Preserved in the Collection of Place MSS., Brit. Mus. 27,799 (10).

the work done by them, than they ought, and otherwise would have done ; nor can any candid man, employed by the higher ranks of society, blame them for so doing. In addition to this came the rise of 3/ per week, on the part of the journeymen. This advance was not accompanied, as formerly, with additional exertions, but, on the contrary, they take more time to every garment than before ; thus operating doubly on the masters, by the advance of wages, and increase of time. Work done by the piece is equally imposing and vexatious.

“ This addition to the time was, no doubt, designed to compel the masters to solicit them to work over-hours, or, in other words, to charge more time for every garment, than they really took to do them in, and that too, at a further advance, at once outraging the feelings, and injuring the property of their employers.

“ The Committee recognise, in the fullest sense, that, ‘ The labourer is worthy of his hire,’ nor would they lend themselves in any way to counteract it. To be governed however, and dictated to, (not in the mildest manner) by the men they employ, is the most degrading situation in which men in Society can possibly be placed. How much that is the case, a few of the regulations of the journeymen will fully prove, which, for the sake of elucidation, they beg leave to notice :—

“ 1st. That no master, however it may be conducive to his good, is allowed to change his men from the day to the piece, or *vice versa*, without giving one month’s notice of such his intention ; which is tantamount to his not being supplied for that month, or

at least, being subject to a very bad supply, and to every other vexation, which the men well know how to inflict.

"2ndly. If a master, in the busy time of the year, cannot be supplied with additional men, he dare not, however he may offend his customers by their work not being done to the time he has pledged himself, give out a single garment to be made without incurring the threat, (which in many instances has been put into execution) of not being supplied for one calendar month for the first offence, two months for the second, and the Committee are informed, that for the third, if hardy enough to offend a third time, he must retire from business altogether, as no supply is allowed him from the combined Houses of Call. Thus they convert their Union into an engine of oppression, which ruins the man on whom it lights. The same law, if it deserves the name, operates in a similar manner against any master who gives, even to his own sister, the lightest garment to make, though she and her family may be starving for bread.

"The Committee would here observe, that this oppressive mandate operates very severely on the industrious married man with a family, since it precludes his wife or children from earning, towards their better maintenance, one shilling in that way in which the husband and father could most readily be of service by his instruction. Such, however, is their imperious law, that he is prohibited from working in his own house, even though his health may be unable to bear up against working in a crowded shop. Thus, neither the health of himself, the maintenance

of his family, nor the fitting his children for useful members of Society, weigh with the combined societies of journeymen. The children, especially if boys are thus driven to the most menial occupations of life, exposed to immoral habits, and not unfrequently become the pests of society, which must, in a great measure, be fairly attributed to an arbitrary regulation, at once oppressive to the masters, and very hurtful to the industrious married man and family.

“The Committee particularly press this arbitrary and oppressive law to the serious consideration of this meeting, and hope that the gentlemen present will unite in their endeavours, by all legal means, to unfetter themselves, and to let industry among the journeymen have full scope. The liberty that ought to exist among all ranks of society pleads for it; humanity, the dignified boast of Britons, raises aloud her voice! Let not the one plead in vain, nor the other be unheard!

“The Committee now proceed to inform this meeting what they have done, in conformity with the trust reposed in them:—

“First, they have had several of the first legal opinions, all of which concur in maintaining that redress ought to be obtained, and would be obtained, if applied for in a proper and legal manner.

“Secondly, They have, with the assistance of a gentleman of the law, framed the outlines of an Act, to be submitted to the legislature for relief, with a petition stating the grievances which the trade labours under, by the unlawful combinations of their journeymen.

“Thirdly, they have themselves subscribed in

support of the cause, and some of their members, much to their credit, have gone round to several masters for subscriptions for the same purpose. This however, they would observe, is a very laborious task, and they think every master should come forward in support of a cause in which all are interested.

“Fourthly, the Committee, have limited their expenditure, when met to transact the public business, to 1/6 for each member present, by which they preclude the complaints formerly made, though not altogether well founded, of the monies contributed being applied to feasting instead of the purposes for which it was designed by the subscribers.

“The Committee here beg leave to observe, that a principal reason of past failures, has arisen from the masters attempting to do, what cannot in the nature of things be done; viz., resisting the men at a time of the year, when the pressure of business will not admit of it, and then tamely to lay down their arms when foiled; for it will readily occur, to every considerate mind, that a combination, subsisting for nearly a century and ripened by experience, is not to be over-turned by a sudden, irregular, and ill-concerted attack.

“Another reason has occurred to the Committee, that there has never been any fund for rewarding the industrious, for assisting them when in sickness, for their support in old age, or for the support of their widows or orphan children.

“The Committee have refrained from anything like exaggeration in the short statement of the grievances, which they, with the trade in general, labour under; nor have they thought proper to

bring forward the particular cases which have come to their knowledge, and is more or less experienced by all. It is not at all likely that the evils complained of will stop where they are; for when men once throw off the restraints of law and reason, they proceed from evil to worse. This remark they are emboldened to make, from having been informed, that it required all the exertions of the more moderate of the journeymen, to prevent the advance being 6/ per week last Spring. This, it may be easily foreseen, will not be long ere it be enforced.

“The Committee now beg leave to state, what in their opinion ought to be done, for the general good of the trade, ever keeping in view that the most distant design of oppressing the men is abhorrent to their feelings, and they trust, to the feelings of this meeting and the masters in general.

“1st. That every master here who has not subscribed should do it now; for which purpose the Secretary is sitting with the books, accompanied by a deputation of the Committee, to insert such subscription.

“2dly. That a permanent and increasing fund should be established, which might easily be done by every master paying a certain sum annually to it. This will entitle him to get relief out of it, for such men as he knows may require it, in proportion to the sums that he has paid, and yearly pays. The fund will operate, at the same time, as a check upon unjust demands made by the Journeymen, and enable the Committee to obtain and enforce any legislative enactment that may be granted for their relief.

“3dly. That such sums as are paid into the hands of the Treasurer, shall be lodged with a banker, and, as soon as the sums so paid will warrant such a step, Trustees shall be appointed by the general body, who shall be accountable for its due application.

“4thly. That the Committee shall meet at least once a month, at the Constitution, Bedford Street, Covent Garden, where any information in writing, directed to the Chairman, will be thankfully received, and every complaint on either side duly attended to.

“5thly. That the Committee shall, on a requisition in writing signed by at least twelve masters, members of the Society, for a general meeting of the trade, call such meeting together by public advertisement, where a majority of the meeting will decide on any proposition then brought forward.

“Lastly, That the Society will meet and dine together, once a year at least, when the books shall be audited, and a fair statement laid before the meeting what sums have been received, what has been paid out of the funds, and for what purpose; and that such farther regulations be entered into as shall then be approved of by a majority of the masters present.

“The Committee are thankful for the plans that have been laid before them by individuals, highly creditable to them as men; and will most cheerfully lend their time in ripening and bringing to bear such as have for their object the union and good of the masters, the support and encouragement of the industrious journeyman whilst in vigour, his

protection in old age, and the support of his widow and orphan children when left destitute.

"The Committee look forward with confidence to the liberal support of the trade in general, the following sums have been already subscribed, viz.—

(Here follows list of names of 136 employers or firms subscribing sums varying from £1 to £20, and amounting in all to £472, 8s. Francis Place did not subscribe, but his old partner Wild, of Charing Cross, had given £5.)

"DAVID OWEN, *Chairman.*

"D. MORRICE, *Secretary.*

"*N.B.*—Subscriptions are received at the following places :—

"Mr. RILEY, 52 Blackman Street, Borough.

Messrs. DOBBINS & GREAVES, woollen drapers, Royal Exchange.

Mr. OWEN, 7 Norfolk Street, Strand.

THE CONSTITUTION, Bedford Street, Covent Garden.

Mr. HOOD, 27 Cork Street, Bond Street.

Mr. PEACOCK, woollen draper, 152 Bond Street.

Mr. GODWIN, Paul's Chain.

Mr. SCOTT, Brounlow Street, Bedford Row."

PROPOSITIONS SUBMITTED BY THE MASTER
TAILORS TO THEIR JOURNEYMEN.¹*August 1810.*

“THE Master Tailors feeling themselves aggrieved by the late proceedings of the journeymen, have authorized their Committee to offer to their consideration the following propositions.

“First, That every master shall be served with men on paying the regular wages, without any restriction whatever.

“Secondly, That no restraint shall be imposed by the Houses of Call on any journeyman exerting himself for the good of his employer.

“Thirdly, That the journeymen shall, without delay, apply to the Lord Mayor and aldermen at the Quarter Sessions, to affix such rate of wages as they in their wisdom may deem proper, and in future when they think a further advance of wages necessary, they shall apply to the same authority for that purpose.

“If these propositions are agreed to, the masters on their part engage to study the welfare and comfort of the journeymen by every means in their power, and will, with as little delay as possible, establish a fund for their relief in sickness, their

¹ S. Sh. Fol. 1810. Preserved in the collection of Place MSS., Brit. Mus. 27,799 (15).

support in old age, and that of their widows and orphan children.

"An answer in writing to these propositions, addressed to the Chairman of the Committee of Master Tailors at the Constitution, Bedford Street, Covent Garden, will be expected on or before the third Wednesday in October next.

"DAVID OWEN, *Chairman*.

"D. J. MORRICE, *Sec*.

"COMMITTEE ROOM, CONSTITUTION,
August 24, 1810."

"SIR,—The above propositions were sent to the following Houses of Call, the Robin Hood, Windmill Street; Bell, Cecil Court, St. Martins Lane; Scotch Arms, Bedfordbury; Alphabet, Stanhope Street, Clare Market; Sun, Long Acre; Mitre, Aldgate; Black Lion, Bishopsgate Street; and White Hart, Butcher Hall lane, Newgate Street.

"The sub-Committee met on the third Wednesday, Oct. 17, for the purpose of receiving the journeymen's answer.—No answer to propositions so reasonable being sent, the masters will easily perceive the necessity of enabling the Committee to take such other steps for their protection as may be deemed expedient, against a combination at once oppressive and apparently incorrigible. Such masters as have not subscribed to the cause, it is hoped will do so without delay, as more vigorous measures are in contemplation, as soon as the

sums subscribed will justify the Committee in so doing.

“DAVID OWEN, *Chairman*.

“D. J. MORRICE, *Sec.*

“COMMITTEE ROOMS, CONSTITUTION,

24 October, 1810.

“Subscriptions received at the following houses.”
(*Same list as before.*) “*N.B.*—Mr. Morrice, secretary to the Committee, is authorized by them to obtain subscriptions and to collect the same.”

ADDRESS FROM THE COMMITTEE OF MASTER TAILORS, SUBMITTED TO THE TRADE AT LARGE, &C.¹

April 1811.

“ ADDRESS

“ FROM the Committee of Master Tailors, associated for the purposes—of resisting the illegal proceedings of their journeymen—of removing the injurious and disgraceful controul which the men exercise over their masters—of preventing their combination—and terminating the mischiefs they occasion to themselves, to the masters, and to the Community,—submitted to the trade at large, at a general meeting held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in the Strand, on Thursday the 4th April, 1811.

“ It must be needless to use arguments or adduce facts, in proof of the positive necessity to take some steps for the better ordering the relative situations of the master and Journeymen tailors.

“ If the contempt in which the master tailors are held by their journeymen—if the disgrace and insult to which they are repeatedly subjected—if vexations insupportable, and loss almost incalculable—if the

¹ Fol. 4 pp. Preserved in the collection of the Place MSS., Brit. Mus. 27,799 (18).

unnatural system of husbands and fathers preventing their families from earning an honest and comfortable livelihood—if that respect, which an important and most useful class of men should command, be worth regard—if the interest of the public at large be worth attention—nay, if the subversion of all order in society be worth preventing—if these, or any one of these considerations, have weight, then the object of the above Association is most meritorious and imperative.

“The Committee have unfortunately been too much accustomed to attempts to obscure their views and confound their objects, not to be on their guard on the present occasion; and to take care that neither their motives or their conduct shall be misunderstood—they therefore, in the first place, call upon every master tailor to declare, whether the above evils do or do not exist, ere a statement be made of the steps taken to redress them.

“Should any one deny the existence of those evils, the Committee earnestly intreat an opportunity to lay before him a series of established facts, such as will convince him that every one of these mischiefs do prevail, in so great a degree, that without immediate check they will swell to a torrent, too late hereafter to be withstood—but the Committee feel satisfied that no individual can be found who will deny the above statements.

“Fairly assuming therefore that the trade at large must admit that such is the case; the Committee next desire to state that they by no means claim any merit in their endeavours to apply a remedy, beyond that of indefatigably devoting their time, and

zealously exercising their best judgment to adopt it. —In the first place, anxious to avoid contention, the Committee made the most liberal and friendly overtures to the journeymen themselves—these overtures the men treated with insult, and rejected with contempt, altho' some of the sober and well-disposed of them at that time expressed their regret that the terms were not complied with; defeated in this endeavour—the Committee in the next place sought all sources of information—repeatedly discussed every plan, whether offered by others or suggested among themselves, that appeared serviceable to the pursuit in which they were engaged—more than once by Public Advertisement they convened meetings of the trade at large on the subject—when they have been informed a difference of opinion existed between them and any one member of the trade, they have both collectively and individually requested the assistance of such member at their meetings; and if they failed in procuring his attendance, the Committee have then uniformly urged his communication by writing, engaging to give it serious and candid attention—could they do more?

“Thus acting in the face of their brethren and of the Community—using their most strenuous exertions—courting every investigation, and conscious of having had in view the real welfare of the journeymen, as well as of the masters, the best interest of the trade, and the benefit of the public; the Committee proceeded to appeal to the existing Laws for regulating journeymen, by making application to the Sessions—the Sessions heard that application, and made their order; but the order of Sessions was

treated by the journeymen with the same scorn as the friendly overtures of the Committee, and the existing Acts of Parliament being found inadequate to enforce it, the Committee presented such a Bill to the legislature, as, assisted by all the advice, information and experience they could obtain, they conceived would effect the object of the Association:—and now by this their last appeal, the Committee call upon each individual of the trade to state any objection he may have to the provisions of the proposed Bill, or to give his aid in any modification of its enactments.

“It would evidently be a waste of time to detail to the trade the particular grievances which they sustain, which every master tailor almost daily experiences, and the redress of which gave rise to the labours of the Committee, and the project of the present Bill of Parliament.

“The several advances of wages were amongst the least causes of the Association—the mode of obtaining those advances by an extensive, organized and alarming conspiracy, was certainly in itself matter of serious import; but the augmented and systematic imposition practised by the journeymen, after these advances, by their taking more time to every garment than they did before, rendered these steps at once extortionate, insulting and fraudulent.

“Even these, however, are trivial grievances compared to other that the trade endures; for paradoxical and incredible as it must seem to all other orders of society—every individual to whom this is addressed, knows that his servant is his master—that he is regulated by his servants’ rules—compelled to

conform to his servants' caprice—dictated to, not in the mildest terms—insulted, menaced, and perhaps ruined, if he dares resist his servants' law; assume the fit deportment of a master, or the independence of a man—Is such a state to be longer tolerated—will a master be found so cringing and contemptible as longer to submit to so degraded a situation?—impossible!

“But, perhaps, some may affect to dispute those truths—of such the Committee will ask; Can you, or rather dare you, change your men from day work to piece work, or vice versa, without leave of your servants—dare you, when pressed in time, give out a garment to be made, altho' you may lose your best customer by disappointing him—dare you employ a single man without leave of your servants—dare you give to a deserving and industrious female, even to your own sister, the slightest garment to make, altho' she and her family want bread—You know you dare not—And yet you call yourselves masters!—masters! a name once respected—let it be so again.

“The public, however, may possibly consider that altho' the masters are thus reduced to degradation, the men may have more comfort and independence—lamentable mistake! the Journeymen's Rules act upon each other also with like mischief and severity—frequently keep them out of employ—force them to the wretched fraud of wasting hours every day whilst appearing to work—absorb their wages by fines and subscriptions to support their combinations—preclude the wife and children from earning one shilling in that way in which the husband and father can best instruct them—prohibit them from working

at home when illness prevents their going abroad—And thus the health of the journeyman, honesty in his deportment, his advance in life, the maintenance of his family, and the fitting his children for useful members of society, are all proscribed by his own Laws!!!—Laws subversive of society itself; repugnant to every principle; insupportable to the master, and destructive to the servant—such are the Laws which the Committee seek to abolish—such are the evils they trust to remedy—should they fail, they still think their endeavours will have the approbation of every candid person, of every good subject, of every honest man.

“As it was evidently impracticable in an address of this kind, to set forth a list of all the Rules of the journeymen, and to give a description of all the grievances they inflict on the masters; in like manner, the Committee are precluded from here detailing the remedies they propose; but the latter will be stated at large to the present meeting from the proposed Act itself—the leading point in them is, to obtain from the Legislature effective powers to confine both masters and men to the quantum of wages fixed by the authorities enabled to regulate them—for, if illegal advance be rigidly restrained, there is an end to the great inducement to ‘striking;’ and the Combination Act will then, in the opinion of the Committee, be sufficient to cure all minor evils.

“But the Committee must not be supposed to have regarded lightly a point of such magnitude as fixing a price on labour—it has occupied their frequent and serious discussion—it has engaged their deep and attentive consideration—they have viewed it on its

broad basis, as applicable to labour in general—they have weighed its effects as operating on this trade in particular—the result has been, that although a free and unfettered exertion be pleasing in thought, and specious in theory; yet like other positions which the corruption of the times and of human nature have rendered visionary; the Committee believe, that labour without regulation will be found in practice pernicious, in effect destructive—on the point as applicable to this particular trade; had the Committee wavered in their opinion, they submit that they would have done well to resort to the wisdom of their ancestors—they did so—they were amply recompensed for their research—they there learnt not only what was considered *proper* to be done, but what was *necessary* to be done *when the price of labour had no limit*—they found, and it is distinctly stated, in the Act of 7th George I., that, when the price of labour had no limit, the combinations of journeymen tailors to advance their wages, forced the legislature to fix the amount; and compelled the Parliament of those days to enact that, which it is the present object of the Committee to carry into effect—no mode more eligible than that now proposed, for correcting the combinations of the journeymen, suggested itself to the judgment of our ancestors—no plan more *préférable* has occurred to the minds of the Committee—or been offered by any one member of the trade—the decision of the Committee therefore, was not only founded in experience, but they had no alternative.

“The Committee are aware they may be asked—has experience proved that the Act of 7th Geo. I.,

cured the evil?—they answer frankly, Certainly not : it has not cured the evil ; and thence arises the necessity for the present application to Parliament ; for the trade must never forget that the wholesome provisions of that Act were never questioned, but the obstructions to its execution were so numerous, that a second Act was passed in the 8th Geo. III., to enforce the former, expressly because, as the Act itself states, many subtle devices were practised to evade its regulations!—You all know, you feelingly know, to what a tremendous extent those devices and evasions have increased since passing the last Act—to guard against those devices in future ; to prevent those evasions, and to remove those obstructions therefore, are the prominent objects of the proposed Bill.—On those grounds the Committee, with confidence, submit its different provisions to the decision of the trade at large, convened this day ; and trust to receive their approbation, and directions to carry it into full effect.

“The Committee cannot, however, close this address without urging to the immediate consideration of the trade, a topic that although last, is not least nearest to their hearts—they wish to prove to the journeymen, and to the world ; that so far from a design to oppress the former, their most earnest desire is to ameliorate their condition, by giving their industry full scope when in health, and relieving them when in age, in sickness, or distress—for this purpose, the Committee propose that a permanent and increasing fund should be established by annual subscription of the masters, which shall entitle them, under due regulations, to grant relief out of it to

aged, sick, or distressed journeymen, and probably to extend their succour, in certain instances, to their widows and orphans.—The Committee feel it useless to enforce the utility of a measure, calculated at once to influence the conduct even of the refractory journeyman, and to gratify the feelings of the compassionate master.—They will only add, they hope this day to see such a plan adopted.”

AN ADDRESS TO THE LEGISLATURE OF
GREAT BRITAIN FROM THE MASTER
TAILORS OF LONDON, &c.¹

April 1811.

“AN ADDRESS to the legislature of Great Britain, from that part of the Master Tailors, of London and its environs, who consider themselves as peculiarly aggrieved by the provisions of a Bill now passing through the House of Commons, entitled, ‘A Bill for amending an Act of his present Majesty for regulating the journeymen tailors within the City of London and five miles thereof.’

“THE intended regulations of this Bill being such as are no less subversive of general equity than of private interest, we have judged it both prudent and just to endeavour to oppose its progress, by showing its impolicy and its injustice. This we hope to do in language somewhat more temperate than has always been employed by the framers of the said Bill, and our confidence in the equity and wisdom of Parliament leaves us nothing to doubt from its final decision.

¹ London, 1811, 4 pp. 8vo. Preserved in the collection of Place MSS., Brit. Mus., 27,799 (16).

“Before we proceed, however, to show the errors inseparable from the adoption, it may be proper to glance at the origin of this Bill, and the preceding Acts of Parliament upon which it is founded. There always have been, and there always must be, in this metropolis, two very different classes of master tailors, and the journeymen who can perform the work of the one class, are totally unable to execute that of the other. While it is obvious, therefore, that those master tailors whose line demands a superiority of work will be both able and willing to pay a higher price to their men; it is no less apparent that the others, whose circle of employment describes an humbler sphere, will be, to a certain degree, unable and unwilling to pay the same rate of wages; as their profits are diminished their remuneration to the men must be less. To prevent, therefore, the possibility of any such general increase of the price of labour, among the journeymen, as may affect their interest, they have devised the present Bill; in which, not content with seeking their own advantage, unrestrained by any sentiments of moderation and justice, they aim also to shackle the hands of those other masters whose interests are quite distinct. They are extremely anxious to impose penalties and pains for transgressions which *they know* they shall never have any temptations to commit, and are reckless of what may be the injury sustained by the higher branch of the trade, which will hardly be able to exist at all without a violation of the enactments of this most preposterous Bill, whose origin is thus deduced.

“But, waiving all considerations of personal in-

terest, it may be confidently anticipated that a measure, which has originated in *private selfishness*, whose basis is injustice, and whose operation must be impolitic, will never receive the sanction of a British House of Commons.

“That it is unjust admits of proof by an appeal to the simplest notions of right and wrong, and to the established customs of society, immutably founded upon those notions. Unless it can be proved that only one scale of excellence in workmen is required by their masters; unless it can be proved that the nobleman wishes his coat to be no better made than his tradesman’s; that to sew up a waggoner’s frock and to make up a fashionable and tasteful garment are the produce of equal degrees of ingenuity and skill; unless all this and much more can be proved, it is an insult to the common sense of mankind to talk about a fixed price of reward. Such a measure is oppressive in the highest degree; it removes the stimulus to exertion, and destroys within a man that necessary confidence of his own talent which always rises or sinks in the proportion of its reward; and it would be difficult to shew why this rigour should be exercised towards the journeymen tailors alone. Have they not an equal right with every man in the kingdom, to expect a reward in proportion to their individual talents? Is it not most certain that while one man among them may scarcely have deserved one shilling a day (we speak in reference to the reign of George I., the time of the Act being passed) another may justly have merited, and ought honestly to have obtained two.

or three. And where does that right exist which would endeavour to bring down the man of talent and industry to a level with the bungler and the sluggard in the rate of their reward? What would a master tailor say, for the case is strictly analogous, if the legislature were to fix the absolute price of a coat, without any reference to the quality of the cloth, the nature of its decorations, or the size of the wearer, and impose heavy penalties upon any master tailor who should dare to ask, or dare to take a shilling more? Would he not appeal, from the tyranny of such a law, to the common voice of human nature, and justify his complaint by enforcing the undeniable truth, that a fixed reward for a fluctuating commodity, is a contradiction in politics and in morals? But let him remember that by whatever argument he might seek to arraign the injustice of such a measure; by the *same arguments* every journeyman may arraign the injustice and cruelty of the measure which it is now endeavouring to carry against them.

“To these positions it may, perhaps, be replied, that the inconvenience which master tailors suffer from the combination of their journeymen, renders it highly necessary that some measures should be adopted for their relief. To this we would answer that the ‘*Combination Act*’ of 40th Geo. III., is fully competent to redress such evils; yet we would exhort them not to overlook a powerful auxiliary, that of holding out a free market for the exchange of human industry. The combinations of the men are but defensive measures resorted to for the purpose of counteracting the offensive ones of their masters.

And here begins the impolicy of the proposed Bill. The fate of two successive attempts on the part of the legislature, to fix the rate of labour, might surely teach us wisdom. The several Acts which were passed, for that purpose, never produced that operation in behalf of the masters, which was weakly anticipated; but they produced something which was *not anticipated*, though it required no powers of prophecy to be foreseen. They produced a vigorous co-operation of the journeymen to vindicate their own rights; a co-operation which has held the masters, more or less, in thralldom ever since.¹ Could it, indeed, be otherwise? Could it be expected that men would contentedly act under a system which the meanest among them must instinctively feel and know to be unjust? Still, however, their opponents are not satisfied, but are striving to draw the bow yet tighter. But, in all discussions upon the subject, let it never be forgotten that every attempt to equalize the efforts of human industry and skill; every attempt to level various degrees of talent and ingenuity, of integrity and worth, to one common ratio of remuneration, is a violation of the most obvious principles of justice and fair dealing, between man and man.

“It is our unanimous and unbiassed opinion, that the interest of masters, of journeymen, and of the community at large, would be essentially advanced, by throwing open the market of industry, which

¹ “Not only has this co-operation injured the masters; it has essentially injured, in many respects, the journeymen themselves, as will be clearly illustrated in the work announced at the end of this address.”

will soon find its level. If the price of labour be left to the mutual agreement of the master and the workman, as in all other cases, the mutual benefit of both parties would be so nicely balanced, that they would operate infallibly as a check upon the extortion of either, while skill and industry would be rewarded in just proportion to their deserts. The effect of a free competition would be, not to *raise* the average price of labour, for though a few individuals, who may have attained to great proficiency in their business, would obtain from those masters who had a demand for such extraordinary proficiency, a higher rate of wages, there would still be a community of talent, whose price would be regulated by the demand for it, and that demand would seldom be so great as to leave no choice to the master, nor competition to the workman: And when every man knew that he could carry his labour to the highest bidder, there would be less motive for those combinations which now exist, and which exist because such combinations are the *only* means of redress that they have.

“These are the arguments which the obvious impolicy and injustice of this intended Bill have suggested to us; and we are not without hope that they will, and must have their due weight with every candid, with every unprejudiced mind. May they also lead to such an issue, as may give to the workmen the fair reward of their skill and industry, and secure the trade in general, especially its higher branches, from all those evils which now threaten it.

“LONDON, *April 19th*, 1811.

“* * * The preceding remarks are but a brief summary of those arguments, which it is intended shortly to lay before the public and the trade, in a separate publication. The present paper was deemed necessary, meanwhile, to counteract the rapidity with which it is endeavoured to carry the measure in contemplation.”

OBSERVATIONS ON THE BILL LATELY BROUGHT
INTO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY THE MASTER
TAILORS, &c., 1811.¹

“OBSERVATIONS on the Bill lately brought into the House of Commons by the Master Tailors, intituled, ‘A Bill for amending an Act of his Present Majesty for regulating journeymen tailors within the City of London, and five miles thereof.’

“THE Bill recites, that the Orders and Regulations made by the Mayor, Aldermen, and Recorder of London, by virtue of the 8th of Geo. III. c. 17, have not been complied with, and that the powers contained in that Act, have been *found insufficient* to enforce such compliance.

“In answer to this, it is to be observed, that on perusing the Act, the powers of enforcing it *appear* quite sufficient, two months imprisonment being the penalty both on masters and journeymen for non-compliance with the Orders and Regulations of the Mayor and aldermen, &c. The statement that the powers have been *FOUND insufficient*, is certainly not correct, as they never have been in any one instance *attempted* to be enforced. If it be true that the

¹ London, N.D. (but evidently 1811), 6 pp. 4to. Preserved in the collection of Place MSS., Brit. Mus., 27,799 (12).

Regulations have not been complied with, the statement of such non-compliance amounts merely to an acknowledgment on the part of the Master Tailors that they have broken the law.

“By the first clause (fo. 2 and 3) of the Bill, two new points are introduced ; first, a power is given to the Mayor, &c., to settle the wages to be paid *for working over hours* ; secondly, the additional wages during a *general mourning* are to be confined to articles of *mourning* only.

“It is conceived that as no authority can be exercised to compel a journeyman to work over hours, this point ought to remain open, as a matter of free contract between the parties ; particularly as there never has been any disagreement between the masters and journeymen on the subject ; the masters generally paying a halfpenny an hour more than the regular pay for working over hours. On this head the Act of the 8th George III., allowing only three-pence an hour for over hours is of course now become virtually inoperative.

“With regard to an extra allowance for *mourning* only, during a general mourning, if such were to become the law, it would be a most extraordinary hardship. At first sight it seems a great hardship on the public, and an unreasonable advantage to the journeyman, that double wages should on such occasions be paid ; but the truth is, that a general mourning is a most distressing thing for the journeyman. Fifty years ago, none but professional men were in the habit of continually having a black suit in their wardrobe, now there is hardly any man (especially about the metropolis) who has not always a suit of

black ; so that the *demand for black*, at the time of a general mourning, *is very much reduced*, and when from particular circumstances, the mourning is for a considerable time *anticipated*, the demand for black is reduced *almost to nothing*. The last mourning, for these reasons, produced much *distress* in the trade ; and at all times after the first demands for mourning have been supplied, which has been generally in *a week or ten days*, a total *stagnation* of business has ensued for *two months*. Instead, therefore, of the double wages being confined to mourning only, they should be extended to all clothes made during *the whole of the time of the general mourning*.

“ The clause in fo. 3 and 4, inflicting a penalty on both master and journeyman for giving or taking, for work done *by the piece*, more than ‘ *a fair proportion* ’ to the settled wages by the day, is very objectionable.

“ It will be observed that, by the Bill, no list of prices is ordered to be fixed or settled by the Lord Mayor, &c., for *piecework*, and yet, if a person gives or takes more than ‘ A FAIR PROPORTION ’ he is to be punished by a penalty. If the prices of piecework are in their nature *correctly* ascertainable, they ought to be settled in the *same* way as the other wages ; if they are not correctly ascertainable it is unreasonable that any person should be punished for taking more than what a Justice (who on such a subject can be no judge) may think, or rather *guess* to be ‘ *a fair proportion*. ’—The trade have a printed list of prices for work done by the piece, consisting of about 150 different items, but labour when so divided, is from the very nature of it, so incapable

of correct appreciation, that neither masters or journeymen are quite satisfied with the list of prices, although they have done their best to settle it satisfactorily. If neither the master tailors nor journeymen can agree, even between *themselves*, as to what is exactly a '*fair proportion*' to be allowed for piece work, how can a gentleman who knows nothing of the subject, be expected to form so decided an opinion as ought to induce him to inflict a penalty?

"In fo. 7 of the Act is a proviso that operates as much against the masters as the journeymen, that is, a proviso '*that no master shall have a foreman [Captain] except in a certain proportion to the number of journeymen which he employs.*'"

"The first objection to this clause is, that it does not limit *the time* during which the master is to employ the proportionate number of journeymen. In the months of February, March, August, September and October, the number of journeymen employed in London is considerably less than in the other months. In addition to this, it is to be observed that many persons follow the trade of a master tailor who have other occupations (perhaps in the Custom House or Excise) and who keep only one or two men, but in consequence of the master's frequent absence from home, it is necessary that one of these men, *or perhaps the only one*, whom the master employs, should have the wages of a foreman in consequence of his extraordinary attention. In large concerns it is very common for the master to send to a house for a '*Squad*' of 10 men and a captain, and to another for 6 men and a captain,

and so on.—The ‘*captain*’ is a man known to be a good workman, and he alone receives the job from the master or the foreman of the concern. The captain, knowing the competency of the different men of his squad, distributes the job amongst them, and takes care that it is properly done and in due time. He alone is answerable to the master, as he alone receives the instructions and undertakes the management of the job, and for this extra trouble and responsibility he receives at the rate of 3/- per week extra, which is generally the wages of a foreman. As the calls for these squads and captains wholly depends *on accident*, it is perfectly clear that any positive legislative provision on the subject of captains and foremen must be impolitic and unjust, and unavailing. All men *bonâ fide* employed as foremen or captains ought to be allowed to take a proportionate additional compensation.

“At the end of the proviso in question in fo. 7 is tacked another proviso still more objectionable, viz.—‘*That it shall be at the option and will of the master to PAY his journeymen either by day work or Piece work as he thinks proper.*’

“Upon what principle the masters can require the introduction of a clause so unjust and *partial* as this, it is difficult to conceive. It is presumed that it is meant that the master should ‘*employ*’ (not ‘*pay*’) the journeymen as he thinks proper, but justice requires that the right to settle the terms of *employment* should be *reciprocal*. If an Act were to pass with such a clause as that attempted to be now introduced, it would have the effect of paralyzing all exertions on the part of the jour-

neyemen, it would be tantamount to enacting that no journeyman shall do one stitch more than the number absolutely necessary *to fill up the day's work*; for what man will work for the benefit of his master *only*, without receiving some compensation himself? If the option is to be on one side only, it ought to be on the side of the *journeyman*. He does the thing which is to be paid for, and is entitled to be paid *for what he actually does* on the highest terms which the law allows. To support the clause introduced by the masters, it must be insisted upon as a principle, that the labour expended is not to be considered as the criterion of compensation for work done, but that work being done, the *master's interest* is to be the criterion of compensation to the person who does the work!

"The Act 8 Geo. III. c. 17, having given the power of regulating the wages to the *same persons* to whom it is to be given under the present Bill, and a competent power to punish any breach of the regulations being also given by that Act; no new powers to inflict penalties being given in the present Bill, but merely a substitution of *Fine* in the first instance, for imprisonment (which is so far rendering the breach of the regulations less penal) it is submitted on the part of the journeymen tailors that no good purpose either to the public, or to the masters, can be answered by passing the present Bill into a law.

"The new regulations attempted to be introduced, that journeymen should be paid double wages *for mourning* only during a general mourning, and that they shall be paid *either by the piece or by the day*,

at the option of the master, are, it is submitted, (the one from the injustice of the principle of it, and the other from its increasing the distress of circumstances in themselves distressing) neither of them entitled to the sanction of the legislature."

SUGGESTIONS TO A FRIENDLY MEMBER OF THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON TAILORS, 1811, BY
FRANCIS PLACE.¹

“SUGGESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

“OBSERVATIONS.

“Every person has black cloaths now, the men at general mournings suffer much from want of employment. It has been said, and is believed, that on the last occasion, 10,000 men in London were kept out of employment for two months.

“This would cause endless disputes, and would enable a bad master to oppress his men, who would have no redress.

“C. This cannot be put into practice. The master will always find some way to compensate the man. It often happens that a man who is capable has a garment to make in busy times which he makes in much less time than is actually al-

“EXTRACTS.

“Fol. 2. Clause to regulate the price of labour and working hours, the former act for this purpose having been evaded.

“Mayor &c. of London, to set the price and hours of working—and the price for over hours—and at times of general mourning only for a month.

“Fol. 3. The master may pay the men at his own option, either by the day or piece

“Fol. 4, 5. No more wages to be given than the sum ordered by the Sessions by the day, or in proportion by the piece.

“Penalty on the masters, £50
” ” workmen, £10
Half to the informer.

¹ MSS. preserved in the Place Collection of MSS., Brit. Mus., 27,799 (20).

lowed, for which he receives the full price, reckoning by the hour. It would be impossible at times to have the business done were this not allowed.

"This will be evaded by partial strikes and by gradually withdrawing the men from certain shops.

"After some time the masters will consent to violate this, as they have all former laws, and raise the wages above the sum settled at Sessions.

"This clause will be nugatory for the reasons above (C.).

It is calculated to do nothing but mischief by producing discord in families, especially in those where there are apprentices.

"This would be found very oppressive, in many cases very injurious to small masters. It is absurd to attempt thus to interfere in the management of a man's business.

"The utmost latitude is here given to, and a large reward held out for perjury. Two Justices are to have power on a summary hearing to fine a man £500.

"The evidence may have

Penalty to be levied by distress. If no effects, 2 months imprisonment by order of 2 Justices."

"General striking or leaving work to be evidence of a combination. Attempting to lessen the quantity of work usually done in any shop, do.

"Fol. 6. Justices may, upon suspicion, summon clerks, foremen, apprentices and servants and examine them on oath as to the breaking or evading the law. If the party does not attend he may be apprehended and brought before the Justices, and may be committed until he answers.

"Fol. 7. No master to employ more than one captain or overseer, unless he *generally* employs more than 6 men, and so in proportion for every 6 men.

"£500 penalty on any master employing persons out of the limits of this Act (5 miles round London) to do his work or any part of it.

"Half of the penalty to the informer, who, in clause 5, is

violated the law by a contrivance to rob his employer. No jury to be allowed in the first instance.

"The Game Laws are less severe."

made a competent witness, notwithstanding he has himself violated the Law. The penalty to be inflicted—by two Justices of the Peace!!!

"Fol. 8. Appeal allowed to Quarter Sessions. Not to be removed by Certiorari. Distress not to be unlawful from want of form, nor the plaintiff to recover without notice or after tender of amends."

"Upon the whole, if this Bill were to become Law, it would be pernicious to trade, and tend greatly to demoralise a very large number of persons by promoting perjury and creating distrust and suspicion, deceit in the never ceasing contrivances to evade it, an increase of hatred between masters and men, and be a bad example to other trades.

"It would tend to bring all law into contempt, inasmuch as it could not be observed, and breaking it would be considered meritorious.

"If the justices are to say more than a certain sum shall not be paid, would it not be equally wise, or absurd, that they should also say, less than a certain sum shall not be paid? If this be not so—will not the Act, be an Act to authorize combinations among the masters, and forbidding them among the men?

"The business destroys the men with great rapidity, as the following accurate account, taken by the Clerk of the House of Call, shews:—

"There are men from	18	to	24	.	.	.	79
"	"	24	"	28	.	.	106
"	"	28	"	32	.	.	102
"	"	32	"	40	.	.	75
"	"	40	"	46	.	.	27
"	"	46	"	56	.	.	16
Total							405

"Very few men can work constantly, doing so affects their health. As a body they are much improved within my recollection, they are more decent in appearance and more civil in their deportment than they were formerly.

"Combinations are generally in practice unjust to some persons. Yet that of the journeymen tailors affords facilities to the masters to a much greater extent than any other trade does, and more than compensates for any evil arising from the perpetual combination.

"The present wages are by no means too high—they cannot average 26/- a week, and for those men who are constantly employed not more [than] 30/- a week."

[Place was examined before this Committee, and afterwards wrote the following to his friend who sat upon it:—]

"My examination yesterday was not what I had anticipated it would be. It might have been carried much further and made much more to the purpose. It was partly my own fault, and partly yours. We should have understood one another respecting the points to be elucidated, much better than we did. The following facts and statements in addition to

what I said are at your service, and if it should be thought likely that they may be made useful, I shall be ready to verify them in any proper way.

"I have found by repeated trials that the thermometer in the workshop when the usual number of men, in the months of May and June, say from 25 to 30 are in it, is as high in the afternoon as it is in the open-air with the sun shining upon it. Sometimes it indicates a greater degree of heat in the shop—in the shade—than it does in the open-air in the sun.

"On the 12th June 1808, with 31 men in the shop, the thermometer at 2 P.M. 97° —at 11 A.M. it was 90° —and at 7 P.M. it was also 90° . In the open air in the shade its highest was 84° —in the sun it was 90° .

"In the winter months there are many hours when the men work by candlelight. The heat of the shop increases gradually from the time the men come to work in the morning until they leave it at 7 o'clock in the evening. I have usually had about 24 men at work during the months of January and February, and consequently there have been 18 large candles burning at the same time in the shop, and as the men at such times close up every aperture they can, from fear of taking cold from being blown upon by the cold air, the air in the shop becomes so far vitiated by the combustion of the candles, respiration and perspiration of the men, and the singeing of woollen cloth by the hot irons very often made much hotter than they should be, that a visible effect may be observed on the flames of the candles. This has been remarked by the men, and

attributed to the bad quality of the candles. The heat of the shop at these times has been so great, that the candles, which when given out were very hard, have become so soft that when removed the fingers have sunk into them.

"The atmosphere within the shop is at these times particularly offensive, several persons whom I have taken into it to witness this circumstance have retired from it with precipitation as if escaping from a pest house. On leaving this unwholesome place the men are at once exposed to the effects of a frosty atmosphere which must produce very bad effects upon their healths.

"Dr. Buchan in his Domestic Medicine says journeymen tailors generally die of consumption. Mr. Oliphant, a very observing gentleman in an extensive practice, and Dr. Reid, physician to the Finsbury Dispensary, entertain the same opinion. The cadaverous appearance of the men indicates very plainly the unhealthy nature of their employment, of whom the men who crowd the Committee room are fair samples.

"My observation leads me to conclude that men who work in the master's shop will be more moral and more *generally* respectable in their appearance and manners, than they who work by the piece at their own rooms. These pieceworkers, who are not undertakers, being often without work between job and job, a kind of employment which produces an indisposition to employment, destroys regularity, induces idleness, and destroys to some extent a man's good opinion of himself.

"I should anticipate some inconvenience from the

employment of men by the piece in my own house which does not at present exist. It frequently happens that several men have to lay aside the work they are doing to take up other work which it is necessary should be done in as short time as possible. I have many times employed as many as 6 men at the same time on one coat; this could not be done if the men were not kept at work in my own workshop, and I should hardly know how to pay them equitably if they were employed by the piece."

“ NARRATIVE OF PROCEEDINGS FOR REPEAL
OF THE COMBINATION LAWS. BY FRANCIS
PLACE.¹

“ IN the same year, 1810, that the *Times* prosecuted the printers, the Master Tailors of London made an attempt to subdue their journeymen and make them conform to their wishes. They knew that this could only be done by an Act of Parliament, and a sum of money was therefore raised by subscriptions to procure an Act. I was applied to subscribe, but I refused ; yet, notwithstanding this, I was appointed a member of their Committee. I attended once, and explained to them very calmly and deliberately the reasons why I did not and could not concur with them, and why I thought it advisable for them to desist, and make an attempt to procure the repeal of all the Laws against combinations of workmen. I shewed them that their present proceedings could cause nothing but mischief, that they would not succeed in procuring an Act of Parliament, and that if they could it would be evaded, no matter how it was worded. I shewed them how it happened that they (their particular trade) had never

¹ MSS. preserved in the Place Collection of MSS., Brit. Mus., 27,798, pp. 9-11. I have extracted from this lengthy and interesting account of the means by which the repeal of the Anti-Combination Laws was obtained in 1824, only that part relating to the tailors and their unions.

been able to make use of the law as it stood, and explained to them that so long as the men continued to repose confidence in those they appointed to manage their concerns, no law could reach them, and that a more severe law would, as they very well knew, increase that confidence. I gave no offence, but they proceeded, and a Committee¹ was appointed to take evidence. When the Committee had sat two or three days I went down to the House, and after hearing some witnesses examined, requested that I might be examined. I had given a sketch of what I wished to depose to the Parliamentary agent for the journeymen, who mismanaged the business sadly, but still my evidence was sufficient to destroy the Bill. I was well known by name in the trade, and pretty well known personally, though I knew scarcely half a dozen of the masters; there were many in the room, yet in no instance was the person of any one of them known to me. My evidence produced a strong ebullition among those who took a different view of the matter. Mr. Barton (?) was Chairman of the Committee; he was a Welsh judge, and at this time was totally blind. When my evidence was concluded some of the spectators hissed, upon which Mr. Barton, in the name of the Committee, thanked me for coming forward as I had done and giving the evidence I had given. Two of the principal master tailors then told the Chairman that they concurred completely in all I had said, and wished my evidence should stand as theirs also. It was explained to the

¹ "A Select Committee of the House of Commons, but an open Committee—that is, a Committee which anybody who chose might attend."

Committee, that I was entirely unknown to these gentlemen, and had had no communication with either of them. This put an end to the proceedings in Parliament. Several master tailors called on me afterwards and thanked me, but not a single journeyman, nor any one for them, came near me, nor at any subsequent time did they do anything to promote the repeal of the Combination Laws—except a small number at one house of call signing a petition for that purpose at my request when I had prepared it for them.”¹

¹ This petition is preserved in vol. 27,800. It is quite a general matter, relating in no way specifically to tailors, and was probably a common form drawn up by Place, and used generally by all kinds of trades.

“ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT, MADE AND CONFIRMED BY A SOCIETY OF TAYLORS, AT A GENERAL MEETING, HELD AND TO BE CONTINUED AT THE HOUSE OF MR. BARGEWELL, THE SCOTCH ARMS, BEDFORD BURY, IN THE PARISH OF ST. MARTIN’S IN THE FIELDS. BEGUN MARCH 25, 1760. RE-PRINTED WITH ALTERATIONS, BY ORDER OF A GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY, ON MONDAY, JUNE 22, 1812.¹

“WHEREAS it has been an ancient custom in the Kingdom of Gt. Britain, for divers artists, to meet together and unite themselves in Societies (but more especially those who profess the art and mystery of a Taylor) to promote amity and true Christian charity, and upon all occasions to assist each other; it is therefore agreed by us, who have entered our names into the book hereunto affixed.—Alexander Braid, *Clerk*; Alexander M’Crea, Joseph Hinsley, John Robertson, Robert Stonehouse, *Stewards*.

“RULES, ORDERS, AND REGULATIONS.

“*Article I.*

“That there shall be a meeting of all the members of this Society, the first Monday after every

¹ London, 1812, 8vo, 16 pp., Brit. Mus. 8275, BR. 2 (1).

quarter-day, and the sixth Monday following, at eight o'clock in the evening; the books to be kept open till ten, and that a box be provided with four locks and keys, whereof the four senior stewards to keep one each.

“Article II.

“That every person wishing to become a member of this Society, must be recommended by a free member thereof, who shall be answerable that the person he so recommends, doth not exceed the age of thirty-four years, and also that he is a native of Great Britain, and by trade a Taylor, and actually gets his living at the said trade, at the time of his admission, and that he is likewise to the best of his knowledge free from all bodily complaints; but should it afterwards be proved that any person so recommended was above the age of thirty-four years at the time of his admission, or not a native of Great Britain, or not a taylor by trade, or not in good health at the time he was admitted, such person so recommended shall be immediately expelled this Society; and if it is clearly proved that the member who recommended such person knew that he was not eligible to become a member hereof, agreeably to this article, he shall also be expelled this Society; and when any new member is recommended and presented before the Society, the clerk shall order such to withdraw from the room until the opinion of the Society is taken, and if no objections are then made, he shall have his name immediately placed on the books, but if an objection

is then made against the admission of any member, his name cannot then be entered, but [if on enquiry before the next club-night such objections appear unfounded, he shall be admitted as from the night whereon he was first proposed. Each member when admitted shall pay to the stock of this Society the sum of five shillings and eightpence for his entrance, and on every club-night afterwards the sum of three shillings and sixpence, that is to say, three shillings and fourpence to the stock, and twopence to be spent for the benefit of the house.

"Article III.

"The members of this Society shall serve the Office of Stewards, which will be six in number, according to their seniority on the books, and whosoever shall refuse to comply with the same, shall forfeit five shillings to the stock, which is to be paid the third half quarter. Should any member accept the office of steward, either by marking his name on the list, or being present, and not relinquish the same in time, so as another may be chosen in his place, he shall forfeit ten shillings to the stock. A list for the stewards shall be made out at the third half quarter, in order that every member may have time to consider whether or not he will stand; and upon the grace-night of the half-year, the books are to be called at ten o'clock precisely; the members not marking their names, or being present if it come to their names, must pay a fine of five shillings.

"Article IV.

"No person shall receive any benefit from this Society, until he has belonged to the same six months; and after such time if he should fall sick and be incapable of working, he shall, seven days after notice has been given to the landlord, receive sixteen shillings per week, provided whether sick or well he pays his dues according to these articles; but should his illness require going into the country for regaining his health, the stewards are to make provision accordingly, not exceeding four weeks' pay; but should the stewards have any suspicion of the person's health requiring his going into the country, they shall at the expense of the Society go to a doctor, and after being satisfied with his opinion of the necessity in that case, they are to make provision as before specified, and the sick member shall send a certificate every four weeks signed by the parson and churchwardens of the parish, or if in Scotland, by the ministers and elders of the parish; any member on recovery, neglecting to send a declaration off, to be fined five shillings.

"Article V.

"If a member demands money on pretence of illness, and be found at work, or taking orders in his business during the course of his being upon the Club, or if he shall be found intoxicated with liquor, or out of his lodgings after the hour of nine o'clock in the evening, from Lady-day to Michaelmas-day, and from Michaelmas-day to Lady-day at

eight o'clock in the evening, or found playing at cards, or any other mode of gambling, he shall be excluded. If a member goes out from his lodgings, he shall leave word in writing where he is gone, so that the stewards may find him, if they require it; on neglect of the above, they shall be fined two shillings and sixpence.

"Article VI.

"No person shall have any benefit from this Society who hath a disorder on him, wherewith he hath been afflicted from his infancy, or any distemper he hath brought on by a loose wicked life, such as the venereal disease; but after the decease of such member, his heirs or executors shall receive nine pounds sterling as legacy, and four pounds sterling for funeral charges. A member having drawn three pounds for his wife's funeral, prior to these articles, in such case then to receive ten pounds, and the legacy to be paid the first half quarterly-night after, if they have the money in the box.

"Article VII.

"If the stewards and clerk do not attend on the quarterly and half quarterly meetings, also the two grace-nights following, namely, the grace-night the half quarter before midsummer, the grace-night the half quarter before Christmas, and the grace-nights at midsummer and Christmas, unless prevented by sickness, and in that case their key must be sent to the landlord, or one of the stewards, before the hour of eight o'clock in the evening, on either of these

club-nights, they are to forfeit two shillings and sixpence; the stewards are to attend the House every Monday night before the hour of nine o'clock, in order to hear complaints respecting the sick, and also to settle among themselves with respect to new declarations, under the penalty of five-pence to be spent by those stewards who meet, the stewards shall receive and pay all money, and take proper receipts for what they pay, and at the end of every half-year they are to give in a just account thereof to the Society and succeeding stewards; on grace-nights every half-year there shall be made out in writing by the clerk, the amount of all cash received and expended, that every member may be satisfied of the augmenting or diminishing of the stock; the stewards on their admission are to give their place of abode in writing to the landlord, that he may know where to send for them when wanted, and should any of the Society-money be embezzled by the stewards, they are to be excluded, and sued at law for the same; and all declarations must be given in writing, the day of the month and the hour of the day on which the same is made to the landlord, and the landlord to give the same to one of the stewards in twelve hours after, or forfeit two shillings and sixpence to the stock: the stewards to visit the sick member in twenty-four hours after the said declaration is given, under the penalty of two shillings and sixpence to the stock, and after the first Monday night's meeting, the stewards to visit the sick member or members every other day, Sunday excepted, if within three miles of the club-house, and within six miles once a week; the stewards so neglecting shall forfeit one shilling

for each offence to the stock: And should the steward or stewards in seven days after the date of the said declaration, fail to pay the said sick member his money, or any future pay, he shall forfeit five shillings to the stock.

“Article VIII.

“If a member lays wagers, or challenges another in his working, so as to undervalue or lessen him in any manner as to the understanding of his employment, he shall forfeit sixpence to the stock; if a member swear or cause any quarrel in the club-room, he shall forfeit sixpence, and for each oath shall forfeit sixpence more; and if a member promotes gaming he shall forfeit sixpence, and for gaming two shillings. Should a member come disguised in liquor, and make a disturbance, he shall forfeit sixpence, and if desired by the stewards to leave the room and does not immediately comply, he shall forfeit one shilling to the stock; the stewards shall command silence, and whoever refuses to be silent when three times demanded by any of the stewards, shall forfeit sixpence to the stock; all fines to be booked and to be paid on the clearance night, that the members should spend their tickets in the club-room; the landlord to be under the fine of two shillings and sixpence for taking them anywhere else.

“Article IX.

“If a member absent himself, and does not send his quarterly money or half quarterly, or exceed three half quarters in arrears, he shall be expelled,

but the third half quarter after midsummer, and third half quarter after Christmas, he shall have a week's grace, the clerk to write to them, to have sixpence for his trouble, and two shillings to the stock, and the clerk and stewards to attend on Monday, and the stewards are to see such members excluded in the book at ten o'clock at night, or forfeit five shillings to the stock ; the grace-nights after midsummer and Christmas the books shall be cleared, paying one shilling every half year for clearance. Any member who shall have a fine owing on the books on these two clearance nights, and omits paying them, shall be wrote to by the clerk, and for which he shall receive sixpence for his trouble, and two shillings to the stock ; the clerk and stewards shall attend the Monday following to receive such money, and if they do not appear that night by ten o'clock, their name or names shall be erased from the books. Country members in such cases shall be allowed until the next club-night. Every member shall have his name and place of abode entered on the Society's books, and as often as he removes from one place to another, he shall acquaint the clerk in writing the first club-night after, or forfeit sixpence.

" Article X.

"No member shall receive more than fifty-two weeks' pay in the space of two years, after which time he shall be deemed a pensioner ; a member declaring off to evade this article to be expelled, but if such member's health should be restored, so as to enable him to follow his employment, he to be con-

sidered as any other member, and shall pay his dues the same, or be expelled; the stewards are obliged to visit such members once every quarter, if within the limits of visitation, and make their report to the Society every quarterly-night, or forfeit two shillings and sixpence for each neglect, but if a member resides in the country, he is to send a certificate signed as mentioned in the articles, once every quarter, or his pay shall be stopped, but if a member through age, or by any accident, become blind or lame, and by that means rendered incapable of working, he shall receive from the Society two shillings and sixpence per week; no patient to receive pay from the land-lord, but from the hands of one of the stewards, superannuated members excepted; when a steward receives money from the landlord he shall be obliged to sign his name in the book, and the day of the month, or forfeit one shilling for each neglect.

“Article XI.

“If any member shall privately design or promote breaking up the Society to another member, and he discovers it to the rest of the Society, the said member who first proposed it shall be expelled, but should the other conceal it for six months, and it be afterwards found out, they shall both be expelled.

“Article XII.

“That if any member of this Society shall be impressed into the sea or land service, and shall appoint a person to pay the dues of the club, he

shall be deemed a good member, and if maimed and rendered incapable of working, he shall receive two shillings and sixpence per week, but if a member of this Society shall enter voluntarily into His Majesty's service by sea or land, he shall be immediately expelled ; but any member may belong to any parish volunteer corps, and even receive pay, and still be deemed a good member.

“ Article XIII.

“ If a member shall die within the bills of mortality, two stewards shall see him decently buried, and if the stewards do not attend, they shall forfeit two shillings and sixpence each to the stock ; they shall be allowed two shillings and sixpence each for their attending the funeral, to be paid out of the stock, the two senior stewards to attend the first funeral, and so on in rotation, or otherwise as may be agreed by the stewards themselves ; if any of the stewards are prevented by illness from attending, they shall be obliged to send in proper time to the landlord, informing him of the same, that the other stewards may provide another person, in order that the corpse of their brother member may be properly attended by that number appointed by the Society ; the executors or assignees of the deceased shall give notice three days before the funeral to the stewards, so as they might see their brother member decently buried ; the stewards conducting the funeral and no other friend, they shall be allowed the sum of five pounds, ten shillings, if deemed necessary, and the one pound ten shillings to be deducted from the

money of his legacy; a man notwithstanding the aforesaid article, by making his will, may leave his legacy to whom he pleases.

“Article XIV.

“Should a member of this Society bring an accusation against his brother member, with a view to have him expelled, and it should be afterwards proved to the satisfaction of this Society, that such accusation was made through malice or revenge, the accuser to be fined five shillings, but on sufficient proof being given to the satisfaction of the Society, he who shall be accused must be present at the next meeting night, and if found guilty he shall be expelled.

“Article XV.

“That at the death of a free member's lawful married wife, he may receive four pounds for her funeral, provided he produces the certificate of their marriage, then the stewards shall draw it and pay on demand, but if he does not produce the certificate of their marriage, it shall be left for the next club-night to settle; but as thirteen pounds is the full legacy and funeral expenses, when a member receives the said sum for his wife's funeral, the said four pounds must be deducted out of his legacy at his own decease; a member suffering himself to be expelled after receiving the four pounds for his wife's funeral, and is afterwards re-entered into this Society, the four pounds which he received for his wife's funeral will also be deducted out of his legacy.

“Article XVI.

“If any dispute happens relating to the affairs of the Society they shall be settled by a majority of the members present, but if there should not be twenty-five members present, the business to be postponed until a full meeting; but if it should so happen that the affairs of the Society should require a meeting sooner than the regular meeting-night, the stewards shall be empowered to direct the clerk to summons the Society by letters, to be delivered at his place of residence, as registered on the book, three days before the meeting takes place, to be delivered free of postage if within the limits of visitation, or forfeit two shillings and sixpence to the stock, for which he shall receive threepence from each member; members shall pay a fine of one shilling if they do not attend by nine o'clock, when the books are to be called; stewards, sick, and country members excepted.

“Article XVII.

“That the disagreeable necessity of shutting up the box may be avoided, and which happens when many members are sick at one time, it is resolved that the stock of this Society shall never be lower than £500 in the three per cent. consols, and in case of a deficiency to support the sick, the money borrowed for that purpose to be inserted in the books to every member, in proportion as the sum wanted, and to be paid as a fine in three half quarters after booking.

“ Article XVIII.

“ If any member after he becomes superannuated should desire to sell out he must give notice to the stewards, and on the next club-night it shall be submitted to the members present, what compensation they shall think proper, not to exceed thirty pounds, according to the age and health of the member ; and if the member does not agree to their proposals, to be continued as before.

“ *N.B.*—All letters must come to this Society free of expence to the Club.

“ FINIS.”

“ Form of declaration on the Fund.

“ I, A. B., being a free member of the Taylors’ Society, and residing at ———, being afflicted with ———, do declare on the Fund of the said Society, this ——— day ——— 18 , as witness my hand.

“ To the Stewards of the Taylors’ Society,

“ The Scotch Arms, Bedford Bury.”

“ Form of declaration off the Fund.

“ I, A. B., being a free member of the Taylors’ Society, and lately afflicted with ———, do hereby declare off the Fund of the said Society, this ——— day of ——— 18 , as witness my hand.

“ To the Landlord of the Taylors’ Society,

“ Scotch Arms, Bedford Bury.”

"Form of notice of Removal.

"I., A. B., have removed from —— to —— this
—— day of —— 18 .

"To the Secretary of the 'Taylors' Society,
"Scotch Arms, Bedford Bury."

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"(Nichols, printer, Earl's Court, Newport Street.)"

THE JOURNEYMEN TAILORS. ARTICLES RE-
PRINTED FROM *THE GORGON*, SEPTEMBER AND
OCTOBER 1818.¹

“JOURNEYMEN TAILORS.”²

“WE shall now proceed to fulfil our promise respecting the state of the journeymen tradesmen in London, and shall begin with the tailors. The present is a favourable moment for the working classes, and they ought to endeavour to recover that relative situation in society, which they held before the late war. From the table it appears, that tailors have, on an average, sustained a weekly loss of more than 7 quartern loaves since 1794; and even now, taking the quartern loaf at $13\frac{1}{4}$ d., they are suffering a weekly loss of $3\frac{2}{5}\frac{1}{3}$ quartern loaves, and would require an advance of $3/9$ a week to place them in the same comfortable circumstances they were in, prior to the above period.

¹ Extracted from *The Gorgon: A Weekly Political Publication*. London, 1818-1819, price 1d., and afterwards $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. weekly (Brit. Mus. P. P., London, 3557, tc. 8vo.).

² Reprinted from *The Gorgon*, &c., September 26, 1818, pp. 148-151.

"A TABLE shewing the amount of the wages of a journeyman tailor from 1777 to 1814; the quantity of bread it would purchase, and the sum he ought to have received in each year since 1794, to make his wages equal to what they were from 1777 to 1795, being a period of eighteen years :—

Years.	Price of the Loaf.	Money Wages by the Week.	Value of a Week's Wages in Loaves.	Loss by the Week in Loaves.	Loss by the Week in Money.	Value in Money of 36 Loaves.
	d.	£ s. d.			£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Average from 1777 to 1795 .	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 1 9	36	...	...	1 1 9
Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1795 . .	12 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 5 0	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 11 9	1 16 9
" " 6 . .	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 5 0	35 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 0 6	1 5 6
" " 7 . .	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 5 0	31 $\frac{1}{2}$	4	0 3 6	1 8 6
Nov. 9, 1797, to Nov. 9, 1798	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 5 0	35 $\frac{1}{2}$	4	0 0 6	1 5 6
" " 9	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 5 0	31 $\frac{1}{2}$	4	0 3 6	1 8 6
" " 1800	16	1 5 0	18 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 3 0	2 8 0
" " 1801	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 7 0	18 $\frac{1}{2}$	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 6 6	2 13 6
" " 2	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 7 0	31	5	0 4 5	1 11 5
" " 3	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 7 0	34	2	0 1 6	1 8 6
" " 4	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 7 0	34	2	0 1 6	1 8 6
" " 5	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 7 0	22 $\frac{1}{2}$	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 16 5	2 3 5
" " 6	12 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 7 0	26	10	0 10 6	1 17 6
" " 7	12	1 10 0	30	6	0 6 0	1 16 0
" " 8	12	1 10 0	30	6	0 6 0	1 16 0
" " 9	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 10 0	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 13 6	2 3 6
" " 1810	16	1 13 0	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 15 0	2 8 0
" " 1811	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 13 0	27	9	0 11 3	2 4 3
" " 2	18 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 13 0	21 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 2 6	2 15 6
" " 3	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 16 0	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 17 3	2 13 3
" " 4	12 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 16 0	35 $\frac{1}{2}$	4	0 0 9	1 16 9
" " 5	...	1 16 0	...	...	...	...
" " 6	...	1 16 0	...	...	...	...
" " 7	...	1 16 0	...	...	...	...

"N.B.—No advance in the price of bread having taken place from 1777 to 1795, a period of 18 years, no increase was made in the wages of the

journeymen, there was no dispute between the workmen and their employers, and of course no striking for wages.

"The price of butcher's meat, fuel, and lodging, has increased with the price of bread; and inquiry proves that these articles were equal in price to the loaf at 16d. for several years preceding 1815; the price of meat has since fallen a trifle, but the price of fuel and lodging remains as it was.

"REMARKS ON THE ABOVE TABLE.

"In the year 1801, although the wages were advanced from 25/- to 27/-, they would purchase 18½ loaves only, instead of 36, as they ought to have done.

"In the next year, 1802, they would purchase 32, nearly.

"Difference per week, of the necessities the			
workman would receive, as valued in loaves			
in two successive years	Loaves .	12½	
Difference in	Money .	£1	2 1
Difference in the whole year, . . .	Loaves .	750	
Difference ditto in	Money .	£57	8 3

"Thus it is demonstrated, that his weekly earnings in 1801 would produce him not much more than half the quantities of necessities they procured him from 1777 to 1795, and that in two successive years he was mulcted of full two-thirds of the quantity of necessities he enjoyed from 1777 to 1795.

"Mr. Ricardo has proved that labour in all old

countries is never paid more for than will serve to maintain the workman in a condition to perform his work, according to the mode of living of the labourer in the country in which he resides. What then must be the consequences of these violent fluctuations? As the workman is seldom in a condition to save much from his earnings, starvation even while fully employed, is the consequence; say he has saved, then he must expend his savings, and they will be expended very soon, and then he must starve. But whoever will take the trouble carefully to compare the results the foregoing table exhibits, will be convinced that saving must at any time be almost totally impossible.

"This will be rendered still more apparent, if it be considered that the business of a tailor is much governed by fashion, and that the quantity of employment is twice as much in the months of April, May, and June, as it is in the months of August, September and October; and from this cause, and from ill-health occasioned by the nature of the business, the whole body of the journeymen may, in good times even, be unemployed about 5 months in the year, and thus their actual wages are reduced one-fourth below the sum which from the table it might be supposed they received, or 27/- instead of 36/-." ¹

¹ A portion of the article is here omitted, as it does not relate especially to tailors, but is a discussion of wages in general.

“MORTALITY OF DIFFERENT TRADESMEN IN THE
METROPOLIS.¹”

“*First, Tailors.*—An account of the ages of 405 journeymen tailors frequenting one house of call:—

“Class 1 from 18 to 24 years of age	.	.	.	79
“ 2 „ 24 „ 28 „	„	.	.	106
“ 3 „ 28 „ 32 „	„	.	.	102
“ 4 „ 32 „ 40 „	„	.	.	75
“ 5 „ 40 „ 46 „	„	.	.	27
“ 6 „ 46 „ 56 „	„	.	.	10
				Total
				405

“Note, not one of the men upwards of 46 years of age had regularly followed his business as a sewing tailor, and the oldest man was in his 56th year.¹”

“Of the 405 rather more than half of them were married.”²

“COMBINATION AMONG THE TAILORS.

“The system of combination of the journeymen tailors, is by far the most perfect of any; and whatever may be said to the contrary it is by no means pernicious in its consequences, under the existing laws against combinations of workmen; but it is actually necessary and highly useful. Shut out as these men in common with all other workmen are,

¹ Reprinted from *The Gorgon*, &c., October 3, 1818, pp. 154–160. Portions of the article are here omitted as being devoted to a consideration of the causes of the poverty of the working classes generally.

² Several pages, here omitted, follow showing that the chief cause of the early deaths is consumption.

from all legal remedy, no other means than those of combination, in order to prevent the utmost degradation, remain, and the more perfect the combination the less the degradation; this we intend to prove in an essay on the laws respecting combinations, in which it will also be made manifest, that those tradesmen among whom combination is the least perfect, are the most degraded and most wretched.

“The organization of the tailors is nearly as follows:—They are divided into two classes, called *Flints* and *Dungs*,—the *Flints* have upwards of 30 houses of call, and the *Dungs* about 9 or 10; the *Flints* work by the day, the *Dungs* by the day or piece. Great animosity formerly existed between them, the *Dungs* generally working for less wages, but of late years there has not been much difference in the wages, the material difference being the working by the piece or day, instead of the day only; and at some of the latest strikes both parties have usually made common cause.

“It is of the *Flints* principally we mean to speak, not only because they are the largest body, but because they always take the lead.

“Each house of call has a book or books in which the men out of work have their names set down, and with some exceptions, they go to work when sent for, in the order in which their names stand. No man is allowed to ask for employment, but the master who wants men, sends for the number he wants; the hours of call are 9 in the morning, 1 at noon, and 9 in the evening; a master may send for as many as he chooses, and if there are as many

unemployed as he requires, they are compelled to go by a heavy fine rigorously exacted. If the master calls the men at 9 o'clock, he may discharge them, or any of them at 12 o'clock; if he calls them at noon, he may discharge them at 4 o'clock; if at night, he may discharge them at 9 o'clock in the morning. Every man is obliged to do a day's work for a day's pay, and the day's work is regulated by the quantity an ordinary hand can do in 12 hours. He must also do his work in a workmanlike manner, or he will be dismissed the house on complaint being thrice made against him. No man is allowed to do more than a day's work in 12 hours, or to work more than 12 hours in a day, while any man remains unemployed, but when there are no men unemployed he may work over-hours; he may also at those times receive more than a day's pay for a day's work, which at other times he must not do. They have several other regulations for preserving order and decorum, and preventing injustice either to one another or to their employers; and also for preventing their employers doing injustice to them.

"They have a double subscription, one for a benefit club to maintain them in sickness and when superannuated, the other a mere trifle for supporting the combination.

"They have also occasionally a much larger subscription for the purpose of maintaining their own members, who cannot be employed when trade is dull, and to these they usually allow about 8/- or 9/- a week. The money for this purpose is raised by a rate of payment, levied on those who have employment, according to the number of days in

the week they are employed ; thus, if a man is employed but one day, he receives as much from the subscription as makes his earnings 8/- or 9/- ; if he be employed two days he neither pays nor receives ; if his employment continues for three days, he pays a small sum which is increased day by day, for as many days as he works in the week.

“ During the three last years, including this, the whole number of men have been but seldom employed, and that only for very short periods, and the quantity of employment is still diminishing. At the house of call before-mentioned, notwithstanding the number has been considerably diminished, such was the distress occasioned by want of employment, that those in work could only afford to those out of work, at one period, 6/- a week ; and more than £40 a week is at the present moment raised by the men in work, and distributed to those who have no work, at this one house of call.

“ And here we cannot help interrupting the narrative to call the attention of the reader to the admirable and equitable conduct of these industrious men, who thus cheerfully sacrifice a portion of their own scanty earnings to assist their fellows, to provide for their own poor by means the most salutary and efficient, which neither degrades the receiver nor exalts the contributor ; means totally void of all ostentation, and wholly unknown to anyone but themselves : We shall, however, have occasion to return to this part of our subject when we come to speak more particularly of the moral considerations which relate to the working people.

“ Each house of call assembles its members on

the Friday evening in each week, when the contributions are collected.

“Each house of call has a deputy, who on particular occasions is chosen by a kind of tacit consent, frequently without its being known to a very large majority who is chosen.

“The deputies form a Committee, and they again chuse in a somewhat similar way, a very small Committee in whom, on very particular occasions, all power resides, from whom all orders proceed, and whose commands are implicitly obeyed; and on no occasion has it ever been known that their commands have exceeded the necessity of the occasion, or that they have wandered in the least from the purpose for which it was understood they were appointed.

“So perfect indeed is the organization, and so well has it been carried into effect, that no complaint has ever been heard; with so much simplicity, and with so much certainty, does the whole business appear to be conducted, that the great body of the journey-men rather acquiesce than assist in any way in it.

“It will be apparent to every one that this combination, the least known of any, is by far the most important for its purposes; and it must convince every reflecting mind that it cannot be used for any really injurious purposes, while those who are so prejudiced as to see nothing but evil consequences in any thing which demonstrates the knowledge and virtue of the working people, may thank themselves and the stupid laws—intermeddling with trade for compelling the workmen to combine in their own defence. It will be our business to shew, that as the law stands they can make no legal appeal against

oppression—the very act of attempting an appeal to the laws, being declared by the law to be a combination to which it has attached the most savage punishments.

“But says the learned, upright, wise and humane judge—be firm ye employers, resist every request of the workmen; if you once give way, there will be no end to the exorbitant demands of those workmen. Such is the opinion of Judge Best; but in our next number we will show, that though the tailors are more firmly and better united than any other class of journeymen, they never once availed themselves of that circumstance for the purpose of extortion, or any other improper and unreasonable object.”

“JOURNEYMEN TAILORS.

“*[Concluded from our last.]*¹

“LET us look for a moment at what the tailors have really done; let us consult the table, and we shall find that so far from their demands being exorbitant, they have been very moderate, much more moderate than circumstances seemed to have required. It seems then, that for 18 years previous to 1795, a week's wages of £1. 1. 9 would purchase 36 quarter loaves, and that in 1795, it would have required £1. 16. 9 to purchase the same quantity. Well, what did the men do? Did they make an exorbitant demand when they requested their wages might be advanced to £1. 5. 0, which still only purchased 24½ loaves? In 1801 when to purchase 36 loaves required £2. 13. 6 did they make an exorbitant demand in striking for £1. 7. 0, which still only procured them 18½ loaves?

“Again in 1807, after two preceding years, in one of which it required £2. 3. 5, and in the other £1. 17. 6, to purchase 36 loaves, did they make an exorbitant demand in striking for £1. 10. 0? In 1810 when 36 loaves could not be purchased for less than £2. 8. 0, was their demand for £1. 13. 0

¹ Reprinted from *The Gorgon*, &c., October 10, 1818, pp. 161-165. The opening portion, which is a general argument in favour of combinations of workmen, is here omitted.

exorbitant? Or when in 1813, the price of the loaf had risen so high that £2. 13. 3 would only purchase 36 of them, was their demand for £1. 16. 0 exorbitant? All their demands have been reasonable, all their proceedings have been conducted with good sense and moderation. No one need be haunted by the bugbear, with the formidable name exorbitant; this terrible fiend has no real existence, there is no such animal with dreadful fangs to devour them, whatsoever the old woman of Chester may say to the contrary.”¹

“But this part of our subject we will treat more at large hereafter; in the meantime let us see what reason there is to conclude the master tailors would have consented to an advance at any period from 1795 to 1813. Not a single shilling was obtained at any one of those periods but by compulsion; at every period as much resistance was made as the masters were capable of making, and had it been left to negociation, the wages would still have remained at £1. 1. 9. In 1795 the resistance was indeed feeble, trade being then in a very flourishing condition, and so much time had elapsed since there had been a dispute that the combination among the masters had ceased to exist.

“In 1801 a more determinate resistance was made.

“In 1807 the resistance was still firmer.

“That in 1810 produced an abortive attempt to put down combinations, and to leave the workmen to the mercy of their employers; by means of an

¹ Several pages describing the horrors of strikes and the anxiety of workmen in general to avoid them are here omitted.

Act of Parliament, the history of which shall be given when we come to speak of the Laws.

"The defeat of the masters in their legislative attempt in 1810, and the difficulty they experienced in raising the money to pay their own expences, caused but little resistance to be made in 1813,—but, all along, every means to prevent an increase of wages, and to bring back wages to the old price, was used; various plans were laid, and among others, that of employing women, who were paid about half as much as the men; this scheme was greatly applauded; at one time the newspapers and canting Methodistical publications preaching the saving doctrine of employing women, from which the happiest results were to follow; they did not see that for every woman employed at wages on which she must be all but starved, she deprived a man of his employment, and of the means of maintaining his family; and thus by barely providing for *one*, they took from at least *two* others the means of subsistence; that what they gained in the morals of the woman, they destroyed in the man and his family; thus extending poverty, and its concomitants, vice, crime and misery; the workmen, however, were better judges than the newspapers and the canters, and they soon found the means to prevent the meditated degradation and its pernicious consequences. This must for the present suffice, as a reply to those who think the masters would of themselves, on the simple request of the men, ever consent to an advance of wages;—whenever such an attempt has been made it has always failed, except in some few instances, and under peculiar circumstances, accompanied

by the knowledge that a strike would follow a refusal.

“Notwithstanding what has been here said of the Master Tailors, they are quite as just to their men as any other class of employers, and there is, perhaps, as much respect and kindness, and certainly less enmity than exists between the men and their employers in any other trade.

“With these observations we conclude our article for the present, on the journeymen tailors. We have been induced to enter particularly into their history, because they are a very numerous, and as we believe, a very worthy, industrious and humane class of workmen, as any in the kingdom. Moreover, there prevails among them a more perfect and better organized system of combination than is to be found among any other class of journeymen; and its history affords a good practical illustration of some important and disputed principles in political economy, as to the tendency of such associations. We have seen, that though the tailors are united in such an ingenious and admirable manner, as to defy the law, and every power on earth to dissolve them, they never once availed themselves of that circumstance, for the purpose of extortion, or to demand unreasonable and exorbitant wages. Nay more, on every occasion, from 1795 to 1813, during which period there were no less than 5 strikes for an advance, they always demanded *less—less* than they ought to have demanded—less than they ought to have received, according to the price of bread, to preserve themselves from degradation, and to maintain that relative rank in society, which it was their

duty, as it is the duty of every class of journeymen, anxiously to maintain.

"But what can the *Morning Chronicle*, who asserts that 'combinations can do no good, that masters will always give what they can afford,' say to this statement? Let him look at our table, and he will see that the tailors procured an advance of wages in 1795, 1801, 1807, 1810, 1813, always by a strike, always in opposition to their employers, always in opposition to the Laws, always in opposition to the Magistrates; and nothing but a determined opposition to this formidable phalanx, could have procured the advance; but for this they might all along have been starving at two or three and twenty shillings a week; sick one-fifth of their time, and unemployed another one-fifth. Neither arguments nor force were wanting at all these periods, arguments to shew how unreasonable they were in their demands, and force to compel them to work for their old wages. But let any one look at our table, and compare the price of bread with the wages they demanded, and say whether the privations they suffered, were not more than sufficient to justify them in striking; and *observe* too, at the different periods they obtained an advance, they never were, except in 1798 (nor indeed are they at this present time) placed in as good circumstances as they had been in for 18 years previous to the late abominable war against human knowledge and happiness."¹

¹ The article concludes with an appeal to men in other trades to furnish similar information concerning them, which is here omitted.

HALF YEARLY REPORTS OF THE OLD GEORGE,
ASSOCIATED TAYLORS, BENEFIT SOCIETY,
1818-1820.¹

"REPORT of the Second half year's inspection, 1818, of the Books of the Old George, Associated Taylors, Benefit Society, held at the Pewter Platter, Charles Street, Hatton Garden:—

"FIRST DIVISION—RECEIPTS.

"Old Stewards left in the box	£ 85	7	4½
Half Quarterly collection	16	10	7
Quarterly ditto	18	17	7
Third Half quarter's ditto	20	11	3
Ditto grace collection	32	2	2½
Half yearly ditto	34	8	0
Ditto grace collection	94	10	2
Member admitted, during this half year, in this division, Simon Ayre	0	10	6
From John Giles, Ford, J. Bell, Walsall, and Davis, their deficiency	0	10	5
Return'd, that was by J. Walsall overdrawn	0	3	0
From Mr. Winstone, the interest of £1450, 5 per cent., stock	36	5	0
From Mr. Glover, the interest of £500, 5 per cent., stock	12	10	0
From Mr. Glover, the produce of £100, 5 per cent., sold at 105½	105	12	6
Carry forward	£ 457	8	7

¹ Preserved in the Place MSS. (Brit. Mus. 27,799, S. Sh. Fol. 1818, 1819, 1820).

Brought forward	£457	8	7
From Mr. Glover, the produce of £100, 5 per cent., sold at 108 $\frac{3}{4}$	108	7	6
For stamps, from Jones and Sharland	0	0	8
Ditto, for Davis and Matthews	0	0	6
From Joseph Giles for an Article	0	0	4
„ William Bevan for ditto	0	0	4
„ Simmons	0	18	0
“ Total receipts of this division	£567	5	11

“DISBURSEMENTS.

“SICK MEMBERS.”

[Here follows list of names of 35 members who have drawn each from 1 to 26 weeks' sick pay during the half-year, at 18s. each per week.]

“Total £214 4 0

“PENSIONERS.”

[List of 18 members who have drawn from 7 to 29 weeks' pension during the half-year, at 6s. per week.]

“Total £135 6 0

“FUNERALS.”

“John Sharland's Funeral and Legacy	£15	0	0
John Jones' ditto	15	0	0
Richard Matthews' ditto, and one week's pay	15	18	0
Richard Davis's wife	5	0	0
John Wheatley's wife	5	0	0

“Total £55 18 0

“MISCELLANEOUS.”

[Chiefly management, pens, paper, postage for letters, payment to trustees for time lost, receiving interest, &c., and selling out stock, includes—]

“322 men's beer money at 1/2 each	£18	15	8
For the extra price of Beer	1	6	10
The Clerk's salary	3	18	9”

NOTE.—On the back of the foregoing is printed a similar account of the "Second Division," and then the following summary of the whole:—

"Receipts of the First Division	£567	5	11
Receipts „ Second ditto	330	7	11½
"Total receipts	£897	13	10½
"Expences of the First Division £438	6	11½	
Ditto Second ditto 299	6	6	
"Total expenditure	£737	13	5½
"Balance of Receipts	£160	0	4½
"Former Stewards of 1st division left	£85	7	4½
Ditto 2nd do, left	117	13	10
Sold out £200 stock, for	214	0	0
"Not actually collected in this half year	£417	1	2½
"Balance of receipts	160	0	4½
"Leaves a reall LOSS to Society of	£257	0	9½
"Bank Stock, 5 per cent, £1750.			
"Number of members in the first division	322		
Ditto second ditto	277		
"Total	599		¹

¹ Two other of these half-yearly reports are preserved, namely, the "Report of the Second half year's inspection, 1819," and the "Report of the First half year's inspection, 1820." Both are very similar to the foregoing, except that in both cases the two divisions are now amalgamated into one and the clerk's salary raised to £7, 17s. 6d. per half-year. Among the new miscellaneous payments in 1819 are several to members for attending the funerals of deceased brethren; and in 1820 there is an entry of expenses for getting the rules enrolled, and going to Clerkenwell (the Sessions House presumably) to do it, and also a charge of 6s. for "making the Landlord's Bond."

THE STRIKE OF THE TAILORS OF
EDINBURGH, 1823.¹

"TO THE PUBLIC.

"THE journeymen tailors of Edinburgh, confident that the public (in general) participate but little in the differences they at present have with *some* of their employers, feel most reluctant again to address them, were they not, from the repeated notices of the masters (some containing the grossest misrepresentations) drawn into the imperative necessity of doing so.

"To again go over the grounds of dispute between the masters and their journeymen would but too much encroach on the public indulgence, by troubling them with details already sufficiently known. They shall only, as briefly as possible, advert to the masters' notice in the *Edinburgh Star* of yesterday (Friday). The masters (those of them whose long list of names subscribed to the notice to the journeymen—many of them the most obscure, seldom or never employing more than a single workman)—they say, the masters, at least that proportion of them, assert that the number of masters who have sent 'their letters of submission to the journeymen does not exceed six,'—*this is false!*—and that 'these are in-

¹ Newspaper cutting, N.D. or title. Preserved in the collection of Place MSS., Brit. Mus. 27,799 (28).

terested members of the Benefit Society of the same House of Call,' is in many instances equally so. The masters would do well for their own interest were they to refrain from making assertions to varnish their story which can so easily be confuted. With regard to the second part of that Notice—respecting their readiness to compare the prices charged by them with those paid to their journeymen—requires but a single comment to show how artfully they try to gull the public; it is an undeniable fact, that the workmen employed by the majority of these masters, have almost uniformly wrought at the rate of from 12 to 15 hours per day, and, consequently, with the sweat of their brow they have dearly earned the wages alluded to, and which, no doubt, on this account, would appear considerable. They only request the public, if they are induced to make such a comparison, to hold in view this fact, to prevent them from coming to an erroneous conclusion.

“The masters having resolved that, ‘on no account they will condescend to take notice of any other letters or addresses upon this subject,’ the journeymen thank them for their past *compliant condescension!* They have come to the same determination—they leave their case to the same public.

“They cannot, however, allow themselves to conclude, without noticing a ‘Card’ in the same paper, addressed ‘to the Nobility, Clergy, Gentry, and the Public in general,’ where they say ‘that the better disposed part of the journeymen will not long refuse the fair and liberal list of prices, this day offered to them.’—There are not two classes of them—no better or worse—they are the same, and unani-

mously declare, that unless the masters meant to insult them, they cannot conceive how they could have the effrontery to lay such an offer before them. With this remark, they add, that they are still as ready to work to those masters who have done this, as to the others of the most respectable masters, whom the public will perceive, have not their names in the list above alluded to—have always paid the just demand of the workmen, and have never been under the disagreeable necessity of disappointing their customers in the execution of their orders.

“EDINBURGH, PHENIX CALL HOUSE,

“24th May 1823.”

“PROSPECTUS OF A PLAN TO RAISE A FUND
FOR THE RELIEF AND SUPPORT OF AGED AND
DECAYED JOURNEYMEN TAYLORS, 1824.¹

“I.—THAT it is indispensably necessary to begin this great work, by recommending a general voluntary subscription through the trade, to be regulated as in individual cases, namely, to run three nights in each Society; and the secretary of each Society to send to the Committee, when the subscription is complete, a regular list of the subscribers' names, and the sums so subscribed to be annexed.

“II.—That the monies so collected shall be sent to the Committee, and be by them invested in the hands of capitalists, namely Brewers, or others trustworthy, for such interest as can be obtained; and if the said subscription should amount to £200, the Committee shall call the first four houses in rotation. And the said subscription shall be funded in £50 shares to each Society as they stand in rotation on the books, beginning with the Bell, and continue through the list of Houses.

“III.—Nature of investment.—That when the money is sent to the Committee, each representative shall inform his Society on the ensuing Tuesday night, what is the whole amount subscribed; and the four or more houses shall appoint one confidential person from each Society to attend the Committee at any convenient place they may

¹ Place MSS., Brit. Mus., vol. 27,799, S. Sh. Fol.

appoint, the Committee to appoint two of their number to attend the same, and see the monies so collected safely deposited, in the names of the Stewards for the time being, and their successors in office; the Society to be at all times responsible for whatever money is entrusted to them for the Benefit of this Institution.

“IV.—That it is expedient that each man, in the honourable part of the trade, after the subscription is complete, should further contribute to the said fund at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per week, to be paid into the Committee monthly; and the said sums so collected shall be funded in like manner, as explained in the preceding resolutions, without any deduction or expense whatever, and a true and faithful account given to the trade by the Town Clerk of all such contributions, with the interest thereof, in each succeeding Quarterly Report.

“V.—That in further aid of this Institution, it is recommended that Philanthropic Societies will be adopted where convenient, but more particularly at Houses of Call, the donations from which shall be separately mentioned in the reports as sent to the Committee, with the names of the Chairman on those occasions, and the sums to be disposed of the same as the monthly subscriptions, and the name of the Chairman to be made as public as possible.

“VI.—That it appears to the Committee, to establish this fund and render it permanently secure, it will be advisable that principal and interest shall be inviolably sacred for at least the term of 5 years from the present date, except the sums received should exceed £4,000.

“VII.—That subscriptions from whatever quarter be received; but no one to be deemed eligible to vote for an applicant, but such as belonged to the Honourable part of the trade for 3 years, or entitled to be a pensioner on the said fund; but a decayed journeyman tailor, or those who by calamity or misfortune are rendered incapable of getting their living, (and those must satisfy their Society that they have belonged to the Honourable part of the trade at least 10 years.)

“VIII.—That all who are to be considered fit and proper persons to become pensioners on this fund, shall be voted in by the trade by a call of the books, and the exact number sent to the Committee, on fine of one guinea.

“IX.—That due notice shall be given to each Society, one month previous to the election of candidates, together with the qualifications, such as their length of time—honourable age—whether they are afflicted with any disease, the nature of their complaint, how long endured such affliction, &c. All to be specified by letter to each Society, agreeable to the time above-mentioned, or such application to be rejected for that year; the trade to be summoned on that occasion, and the election to take place annually, and to be inspected by the Committee previous to the case being approved of by the trade, subject to the regulation of the 21st [?] article.

“X.—That any attempt to impose on this fund, by false statements, or any endeavours made by an applicant to bribe, or influence, or mislead his Society, for the purpose of unworthily promoting

his claim, such person or persons so doing, shall for ever be excluded the benefits of the said fund.

“XI.—That any man leaving the Society, on his return to the Honourable part of the trade, shall pay as private debts due to the Society whatever money is due from them to this institution into the Committee, to be by them added to the general stock of this Institution; and that all fines incurred by the Society, as stated in the 8th resolution, shall go to the regular fund.

“XII.—That the establishing this fund is intended as much to relieve the trade from the unexampled burthens they at present labour under, as to secure to the meritorious and deserving a pension for life. The first to be considered as most eligible are the present annual claimants, at the expiration of the term expressed in the 7th Resolution.

“XIII.—That the Committee, in strongly recommending to the trade the adoption of the foregoing Resolutions, have been actuated by no other but *humane motives*, giving their time, trouble, and expense gratuitously, for the benefit of those who are or may be dependent on the trade for protection and succour.

“Leaving them in your hands, we implore you to become Patrons and Founders of an Institution worthy of yourselves; and the rising generation in the trade will respect the memory of those of the present day, for having secured to them that gratifying assurance of being, when in the vale of life, secure from indigence and all its attendant consequences.

THE STRIKE OF THE TAILORS OF BIRMINGHAM, SEPTEMBER 1825.¹

“TO JOURNEYMEN TAILORS.

“*September 19th, 1825*:—Wanted immediately, a number of Journeyman Tailors. Good steady workmen will meet with constant employment, at 27/- per week—day or piece-work, by applying to Catstree, New Street; Dabbs, Snow Hill; Bate, New Street; Cadby, Aston Road; Gresley & M'Bryd, Union Street; Forster, Newhall Street; English, Cherry Street; Herbert, Colmore Row; Allport, ditto; Minshull, Ann Street; Hatton, ditto; Waring, ditto; Johnson, Summer Lane; Pigg, Suffolk Street; Henshaw, St. Paul's Square; Sabel, ditto; Bull, Livery Street; Wilson, King Street.

“*N.B.*—Gentlemen are particularly solicited to allow as much time as possible with their orders, to admit of their being sent to town to be executed.

“The Master Tailors would not trouble the public with a recital of any of their grievances, but from the untrue statements of their journeymen in their Advertisement in the *Chronicle* of Thursday last.

“We now beg leave respectfully to state, that we never took any part in regulating or agreeing to their list of prices in April last, but were obliged to

¹ Extracted from “A Century of Birmingham Life,” by J. A. Langford, vol. ii. pp. 465, 466; and from the local press.

submit to the imposition of paying them upwards of 30/- per week, under the mask of what they are now pleased to call twenty-seven shillings.

“We have since offered them 27/- per week day-work (the nominal value of their demand) and would willingly have given good coat hands 28/- or 29/- according to merit. To our requisition at that time, for them to appoint a deputation to meet a similar deputation of masters, to simplify their list into day-work, or make such alteration as would tend to the interest of both parties, we need only add their reply in order to convince a discerning public how unwilling the men were to come to any terms of amicable adjustment.

“Copy of the Journeymen’s reply above referred to, addressed to the Secretary, Mr. Bate, New Street :—

“‘Sir, in answer to yours I have to inform you, it is our determination to stand or fall by the list you have been presented with, and not to rob masters who have promised to support us.

“‘*N.B.*—We are ready to serve you or any other master on the same terms.

“‘Yours obediently,

“‘JOHN TAYLOR, *Secretary.*

“‘*April 12th, 1825.*’

“The public will at once see by the above letter, the combination we have to cope with; and it is chiefly by a reliance on their indulgence for a short period, in the way pointed out as above, that we hope to ensure complete success. The failure of

their funds will at once take from them the power of unlawfully bribing and enlisting those men who are willing to work by the new list. Their threats deter steady workmen from returning to their duty; and offers are held out by the Society to induce them to leave their employers.

"It is now our determination to prosecute those misguided individuals who may in future be detected in the above practices; nor will we take any of them into our employment so long as they are members of the original House of Call the Three Crowns, Worcester Street.

"September 16th, 1825."

"TO JOURNEYMEN TAILORS.¹

"Thursday, September 15, 1825.—A number of good workmen will meet with constant employment at once at 27/- per week, day or piece work. Apply at the under-mentioned."²

"TO MASTER TAILORS.³

"September 15th, 1825.—The journeymen most respectfully inform them that they may be supplied with good workmen, at their original house of call, the Three Crowns, Worcester Street, at the average wages of 27/- per week as regulated and agreed to

¹ Advertisement from the *Birmingham Chronicle and General Advertiser of the Midland Counties*, 15th September 1825 (Birmingham Library).

² A list of the names and addresses of eighteen employers followed, which is here omitted.

³ Advertisement printed immediately under the employers'.

by masters and men in April last ; but they cannot agree to submit to the masters' new list dated August 22nd, 1825, for it would be a reduction of our wages 3/- per week, and in some articles more.

“ *N.B.*—The journeymen beg leave to inform the public that it is only a minor part of the masters that wish to reduce their prices, which a more full explanation will convince gentlemen that they need not wait for their clothes being sent to other towns to be made, for there is a number of good workmen now out of employ who are willing to work at the prices agreed last April. When gentlemen consider the many privations of the journeymen they will not deem 27/- per week exorbitant at the very high prices of the necessaries of life.”

EXTRACTS FROM "AN ACCOUNT OF THE EDINBURGH REFORM JUBILEE, CELEBRATED 10TH AUGUST 1832 ; ALSO THE LEITH REFORM JUBILEE, CELEBRATED SAME DAY,"¹ &C., &C.
EDITED BY W. MILLAR.

"49. *St. Andrew's Society of Tailors.*

"THE *trades* flag of green silk ; arms, a royal tent in chief, and lion passant, gardent, in gold ; crest, a tree and serpent ; supporters, Adam and Eve as large as life ; motto, 'Nudus et amicitivistis me.' A natural design of Rose, Thistle and Shamrock underneath. A large banner of Blue silk, with a shield in the centre. A pair of gilded sheers ; motto above, 'Knowledge is Power ;' Below, two hands joined, and underneath the words, 'A man's a man for a' that.' Banner of green silk with the name and age of the Society. Two groups dressed in fancy costume, illustrative of the dresses worn in Spain, Poland and Turkey. The first as Don Juan ; second as Captain of Light Horse in the Polish army ; and the third as grand Turk, worn by a man of colour, who was supported on either side by the two former characters. There were also two Highland costumes, one a court dress worn by a boy nine years old ; the other as approved

¹ Brit. Mus. 8o8 M. 16 (69), pp. 40 and 47 ; Edinburgh, 1832, 60 pp. 8vo.

of by the Highland Society of Scotland. The whole body wore silver medals, suspended by a green ribbon, and decorated with tricolours, surmounted by a figure of St. Andrew in silver also. The office bearers carried rods of green and gold, and wore green sashes with silver thistles, the names of the offices held by each emblazoned thereon."

" 68. *Phoenix Society.*

"The number '68,' with a representation of the mast of a ship rigged, and pennant flying from the top, supported by two marshals with batons. The staff of the Society, of carved oak, supported by two marshals with batons. Amongst the members of the Committee was an old member wearing a cap of liberty, with a large grey feather. The flags of the Incorporation of Tailors of Easter and Wester Portsburgh, supported on each side by a member of the Society in full Highland costume, with broadswords; also by two members in the dress of the Society, carrying two very ancient real match-lock muskets. A very splendid new green flag; design—in the centre a gilt shield resting upon a Phoenix; the shield surrounded with thistles, and surmounted with a helmet, over which is a tree with a serpent, and inscription, 'The Phoenix Society of Tailors;' supporters of the shield, Adam and Eve; motto, 'Nudus et amicitivitis me.' Flags of the Incorporation of Tailors, Musselburgh. Banner of the Society; motto, 'Knowledge is Power.' A very beautiful laurel banner, with mottos in the centre; one side, Grey, Brougham, Russell, Althorp; reverse, 'The House of

Commons have done their duty, let the People do theirs.' Next came the apprentices, with their banner, &c. At the head of the boys was carried a rich carved Phoenix in burnished gold. A banner with a bust of Earl Grey; supporters, two boys crowning him with laurel; motto at the top, 'An honest man is the noblest work of God;' Scroll, under the feet of the boys, 'We will defend the rights our fathers have secured.' A very neat carved crown of burnished gold. A banner representing Britannia, with the inscription at the top, 'The Mother of Liberty;' motto, 'Ye Patriots guard her with a miser's care.' A Banner; in the centre, the word 'Grey;' from which is radiating a golden glory filling the whole banner. A Banner; in the centre a pair of large sheers; motto, 'By these we live, and by these we have shaped our freedom.' The national banner of St. Andrew, under his feet, Union Hands; motto, 'Union is Strength.' "

"LEITH REFORM JUBILEE.¹

"*Incorporation of Tailors.*

"A green silk flag with the arms of the Incorporation; a yellow silk flag with a Lion Rampant, encircled with the Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock: motto; 'The Revolution of 1688, the United People of 1832.'

"13. *Tailors.*

"Gilt shears. First Banner; motto, 'May our future conduct never stain the victory so nobly gained.'

¹ Pp. 49-60.

Second Banner; motto, 'Liberty the Joy of every man.' The first and second banner supported by baton men. Third banner; motto, 'May the blessing of freedom descend to our children's children;' supported by boys carrying thistles. The Committee carried wands and wore sashes.¹

¹ I have reprinted only these portions of one of the numerous documents relating to this subject. The volume 808 M. 16, Brit. Mus., contains no fewer than eleven different documents giving an account of this procession, &c.; while there are others in the volumes 808 M. 17 and 1882 D. 2.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE JOUR-
NEYMEN TAILORS OF LONDON, 18TH
NOVEMBER 1833.¹

“AT a public meeting of the Society, held at the Black Horse, on Thursday evening, the 7th of November 1833, a Committee was appointed to meet during the week, to frame resolutions to be submitted to a public meeting. The Committee having met accordingly and drawn up the necessary resolutions, a public meeting was appointed to be held on Monday evening, the 18th.

“Pursuant to the above, the Circus, Great Windmill Street, Haymarket, was engaged for holding a public meeting, which being duly announced (in the *Morning Advertiser*, and evening *True Sun* of Saturday, November 16th), was held on Monday the 18th, when the resolutions, as drawn up by the Committee, were submitted to a numerous assembly and approved of, as follows:—

“Public meeting, Novr. 18th, 1833, held at the Circus, Great Windmill Street, Mr. Brown in the chair. The following Report of Committee was brought up and read:—

“Your Committee having met according to appointment at the Black Horse, Rathbone Place, on Monday evening the 11th, and following days, to

¹ Reprinted from *The Crisis*, vol. iii., No. 14, 30th November 1833.

take into consideration the best means of assisting the general body of the trade in the present period of difficulty and distress, first proceeded to discuss those modes which severally appeared to them the most eligible to that end.

“But from considerable experience and mature reflection, they consider, that in the present state of Society, it would be premature to recommend any definite plan, believing *that subsequent experience alone* can develop such plan or plans as will be found the most practicable. and efficient for the general good. Nevertheless, they consider the first step necessary to be the formation of a Union, to consolidate, under one interest, the whole body of the trade; to concentrate the intelligence and experience of every individual therein, and from such source be enabled to deduce such measures as shall prove in their operations the most beneficial and lasting. And after having formed one solid and compact Union in our own trade, to unite the same with all other trades, thereby to embody the whole of the working classes in one grand and glorious Union. Your Committee also took into their consideration the present scarcity of employment, so generally and so justly complained of, seeing that the supply has so greatly exceeded the demand, whereby the quantity of labour required has unequally and unjustly fallen into the hands of the few, while the many are left too partially employed, if not altogether in a state of indigence and idleness.

“To remedy this evil, they recommend that a considerable reduction in the hours of labour take place, in order that the labour now required, may be

equally distributed to every member in the trade, without abridging the amount of wages now paid to each individual for such full time. They recommend this to be as speedily as prudent attended to, being convinced that the full wages now paid are but barely sufficient for individual necessities. They consider it necessary also to state, that this Union should be formed upon principles of the strictest equality, that no man shall be before or after his fellow-men in point of precedence or power, but that every member shall possess his individual right to all privileges in this Union in equal degree with the whole body, by the payment of one penny weekly, to raise a fund for any purpose approved of by the majority.

“And lastly, they recommend this meeting to form themselves into Union, upon the plan of a lodge, to be called the First Lodge of United Tailors, to be under the direction of officers, appropriate to the same, and elected by this meeting. In conclusion, therefore, they now lay before you certain resolutions, embodying the substance of this Report, submitting the same to your general consideration.

“The Report being received, the resolutions were then submitted, in the following order:—

“Resolved.—1st. That this Committee deem it necessary to endeavour immediately to unite the whole body of this trade, and to take such steps as experience may from time to time dictate, in order to raise every individual from their present degraded state in Society, and ultimately to incorporate themselves with other trades who may act in concert with them for the same object.

"2nd. That the supplies having greatly exceeded the demand, many of our brethren are in consequence destitute of employment. It is necessary, therefore, that a considerable reduction in the hours of labour be, as speedily as prudent, adopted, to make the demand equal to if not above the supply, thereby to give to each an equal and a due portion of employment, without any reduction in the remuneration of such labour.

"3rd. That in order to place this Union upon the broad basis of equality, every individual joining the same shall become a member without difference or distinction.

"4th. That in order to carry out the object of this Union, it is necessary that each member subscribe one penny weekly, to be applied to such purpose as shall be deemed expedient by a majority of members.

"5th. That a lodge be formed, and officers appointed, &c.

"After this follows the names of officers, which we omit mentioning for what were deemed prudent reasons."

REPORT OF MEETINGS OF THE MASTER
TAILORS OF LONDON, 28TH AND 29TH
APRIL 1834.¹

“AT a very numerous meeting of the master tailors of the Metropolis, held at the Thatched House, Tavern, St James’s Street, on Monday, April 28th, and by adjournment to Willis’s Rooms, King Street, St. James’s, on the following day; Mr. Leslie in the chair; the following Circular Letter and Regulation from the journeymen tailors having been read:—

“25 LITTLE QUEEN STREET,
April 25, 1834.

“SIR,—By direction of the Friendly Society of Operative Tailors, I have to acquaint you, that in order to stay the ruinous effects which a destructive commercial competition has so long been inflicting upon them, they have resolved to introduce certain new regulations of labour into the trade, which regulations they intend should commence from Monday next; and I beg herewith to enclose you a copy of them:—

“REGULATION.

“No brother shall be allowed to work more than ten hours per day from the third Monday in the

¹ Advertisement in the *Times*, 30th April 1834.

month of April to the last Saturday in the month of July; nor more than eight hours per day the remaining eight months of the year; and for such labour the remuneration shall be 6/- per day for the ten hours labour, which is to be performed between the hours of 7 in the morning and 6 in the evening; and 5/- per day for the eight hours labour, to be performed between the hours of 8 in the morning and 5 in the evening, out of which time, in either case, he shall leave his employer's premises one hour for refreshment. Nor shall any brother work for an employer anywhere but on his (the employer's) premises, which shall be healthy and convenient, or on any other terms than by the day or hour. And no person shall be allowed to solicit employment, or to work for less than the regular wages within four miles of Covent-Garden.

“As the demands there specified are of so reasonable a nature; and as, moreover, they are unquestionably calculated for the ultimate benefit of the employers, as well as the employed, the Society confidently hopes that you will accede to them, and that henceforward a mutual confidence may be sustained between masters and men, and that their interests may be no longer separated and opposed to each other.

“It only remains for me to add, that your workmen, members of this Society, will cease to be employed by you, should you decline to act upon the new regulations; and further, I think it right to apprise you that, in that case, they will no longer consider it necessary to support your interest, but will immediately enter the arrangements prepared by

the Society for the employment of such members for the benefit of the Society.—I am, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

“JOHN BROWNE,

*“Secretary to the Grand Lodge of
Operative Tailors.”*

“The first Resolution was moved by Mr. Stulz, seconded by Mr. Housley, and carried unanimously ;

“That the above regulations would (if acceded to by the master tailors) be both in principle and effect injurious to the employers and employed, because, firstly, an increased demand of nearly 25 per cent. on the present rate of wages (6/- per diem) is neither called for by the circumstances of the times, nor the actual condition of the trade, the present scale of wages having been fixed in the year 1813 by the workmen themselves ; and secondly the 4 lb. loaf then cost 17d. (the same sum at this time would purchase one of 8½ lbs.). Meat also is reduced about 30 per cent., and coals are about half the price as compared with the prices in 1813.

“The second Resolution was moved by Mr. Nugee, seconded by Mr. Willis, and also carried unanimously ;

“That this meeting is of opinion that the regulations proposed to the master tailors are founded on gross injustice to the working men, inasmuch as they fix the maximum which an industrious man may earn, and make no distinction between the industrious and talented, and the incompetent and idle.

“The third Resolution was moved by Mr. David-

son, seconded by Mr. Burghart, and also carried unanimously ;

“That this meeting consisting of the under-mentioned master tailors, do individually and collectively resolve and pledge themselves not to comply with the present exorbitant demands of the workmen.

“The fourth Resolution was moved by Mr. John Meyer, seconded by Mr. Story, and also carried unanimously ;

“That the greatest publicity be given to the proceedings of this meeting, and that the nobility, gentry and public be respectfully requested to co-operate with the master tailors, by suspending or delaying the orders they may already have given, or intend to give, until the workmen resume their employment at the prices hitherto paid by the trade.

“The fifth Resolution was proposed by Mr. Harrison, seconded by Mr. Cartwright, and also unanimously agreed to ;

“That in order to encourage those men who are dissatisfied with the imperious mandate of the Trades’ Union, the Committee elected on the previous evening be empowered to appoint houses of call for the reception of all workmen willing to secede from the Unionists, and to be employed at the wages hitherto paid, and that this meeting pledge themselves to give exclusive support and encouragement to such men.

“The sixth Resolution was proposed by Mr. Field, seconded by Mr. Meyer, and carried unanimously ;

“That this meeting gratefully acknowledges the kindness with which the nobility, gentry and the public have already met the wishes of the master

tailors of the Metropolis, and respectfully request a continuance of their support.

"The seventh Resolution was moved by Mr. Hudson, seconded by Mr. Robinson, and carried unanimously;

"That the Committee appointed at the previous meeting be requested to carry into effect the intent and object of the foregoing resolutions, such Committee to consist of the following gentlemen, with power to add to their number :—

Mr. Leslie, *Chairman*.

Mr. Stulz.

Mr. Housley.

Mr. Nugee.

Mr. John Meyer.

Mr. Willis.

Mr. Story.

Mr. Burghart.

Mr. Hudson.

Mr. Cartwright.

Mr. Cook.

Mr. Wm. Simpson.

Mr. Edward Simpson.

Mr. D. Stewart.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. Stock.

Mr. Wylie.

Mr. Holt.

Mr. Stewart.

Mr. M'Allan.

Mr. T. Davidson.

Mr. Adeny.

Mr. Gurney.

Mr. Pulford.

Mr. Hamson.

"The thanks of the meeting having been unanimously voted to the Chairman for his able and impartial conduct in chair, the meeting was adjourned."

[*A column and a half of names and addresses of firms follow—in all, 435 names.*]

“THE ADDRESS OF THE JOURNEYMEN
TAILORS OF THE METROPOLIS, MAY
1834.¹

“THE Committee of management of the Friendly Society of Operative Tailors in London, in consequence of the gross misstatements put forth by the master tailors in the public papers with reference to the new Regulations which the Society has proposed to them, in order to make a stand against the enormous oppression of capital, and even labour, in their trade, feel called upon to make an honest appeal to the public and their friends in vindication of the measures they have adopted, and to expose and refute some of the gross errors, falsehoods and prejudices which the masters and that infamous tool of a pampered aristocracy, the *Times*, have so unjustly, cruelly and maliciously attempted to foist upon the public mind respecting these subjects.

“Does that idle and useless part of Society, the aristocracy, know from whence they spring? Do they know whom they threaten with starvation?

“To whom do they owe all the necessities, comforts and luxuries of life they so ungratefully enjoy, but to those whom they unite against? Does the poor, mercenary, time-serving tool of tyranny and oppression, the editor of the *Times*, think the Unions,

¹ Reprinted from *The Pioneer*, 10th May 1834.

or any branch of them, regard the names or silly epithets with which he is pleased to assail the honest industrious artizan, with his usual fraudulent meanness? In order to justify a barbarous conclusion, he has been compelled to advance a villainously false position.

"The masters refuse to accede to the new regulations, calling them unjust; because, say they, the men have six shillings per day, which wages, by the new regulation, would be increased twenty-five per cent., an advance they contend to be uncalled for, on account of the decreased price of provisions, &c.; now, conceding to them, that if six shillings were amply sufficient to supply the labourer with all the necessaries and comforts of life he is entitled to, which it is not, the Committee most solemnly assert and maintain that few, very few, journeymen are able, in the trade, by almost unceasing application, to earn any such sum—in fact, six shillings per day, according to the old system of the trade, is a merely nominal price of wages, which rarely indeed even approach that sum in reality. The public, by the declaration of the masters, are led to suppose that those workmen who are employed in the shops of their masters are allowed 6/- per day for whatever garment they make, or whatever part of it they may be employed upon; for indeed, it not unfrequently occurs that four men, nay six men, are compelled to assist in making the same garment, and never, except in very inferior shops, are there less than three, to execute what, in all other countries, is but one man's work. The masters fix a sum varying from 15/- to 18/-, as the price of a coat, which, if

executed at the first price in 30 hours, or at the latter in three days, would certainly yield sixpence per hour. But mark! when is the garment finished in the time allotted? I answer, never: and when finished, except in one month of the year, when do they get another? perhaps wait for 4, 6, 8 hours, or a day, and then be told by their insolent employer, or his more insolent foreman, 'they must wait.' No man knows one day whether he may have bread for himself or family the next nine months in the year; men are kept in the fear of poverty, insulted and oppressed, ever and anon threatened with immediate dismissal for the most trifling, the most trivial mistake or mishap; loitering and crippling away their valuable time one part of the day or week about the workshops—are hurried, oppressed or desponding the other: this, with a few exceptions, is the lot of the favoured part of the trade, the fortunate few; what is the lot of the many? Let the man of feeling, in whose breast the milk of human kindness has not been curdled or dried up by the wretched circumstances in which a great portion of society has been placed; let him visit the branch lodges, and see the pale haggard countenances of the starving many; let him follow the married man home to his almost unfurnished garret, and see the deplorable condition in which is the famished partner of his misery, with him in the like deplorable condition, and then let him say, with the dastardly *Times*, that the proposed regulation is uncalled for.

“Contrast these sufferings and misery with the stately mansions, the splendid halls, the costly

furniture, and the princely fortunes of the masters, and with your hand on your heart, say whether the regulation is, or is not called for. Again, have not women been unfairly driven from their proper sphere in the social scale, unfeelingly torn from the maternal duties of a parent, and unjustly encouraged to compete with men in ruining the money value of labour?

"The *Times* lies when it says that the tailors of the Metropolis have struck against these poor creatures. With those sufferings and privations the Committee deeply sympathize, and the terms under which they obtain employment are of a nature too gross for the public ear.

"The crafty time-serving slave would fain turn our mothers and sisters against us, to assist his masters, the aristocracy, in their ignorant opposition to our class, ungratefully forgetting how much they owe to the tailor for their personal dignity; in fact, in very many cases, the workmanship of the tailor is the only difference between the aristocrat and the artisan, with this slight exception, that there is a dignity in the warm passions of the latter which is never to be found in the cold malice of the former, whose canine venom knows no relief but revenge. Could our affections forgive, or humanity forget the wounds of our injured countrymen, or the sufferings of the widows and orphans of injustice, we might under the influence of a momentary oblivion, stand still and laugh; but they are engraven where no amusement can conceal them, and of a kind for which there is no recompense. Know, ye tyrants, that union is the foundation stone of liberty and independence—the

rock on which it is built. Tamper not then with our feelings by insidious contrivance or falsehood, nor suffocate our humanity by seducing us to dishonour, for——

“Now, to the exorbitant, unjust and tyrannical regulations proposed by these knights of the thimble—to say nothing of the bodkin and shears. Friends, fellow countrymen, and brothers: I have, without colouring or exaggeration, given you some slight idea of how men are served out who work in shops. There has been a large portion of the trade, for various reasons, under different circumstances, compelled to work at their homes, if so they may be called—the price of whose labour is necessarily reduced by the cost of extra firing for the irons, for extra candles, and also by the loss of time which they experience in going to and from their employers, for their work; moreover, they in general have to find their sewing trimmings, which are always supplied to men when they work in the shops of their masters; and the men working at home are scarcely ever able to earn more than 3/6 or 4/— per day, with the assistance often of their wives and children, and then, as I have before stated, only when they can get work to do. Even these men, working in this manner at this great reduction, are very frequently days, nay months, without employment, and consequently without pay. If, however, an order comes in to be executed immediately, the journeyman must labour night and day to accommodate the customer and master, and make every sacrifice of health, and the only remaining domestic comfort on such occasions, or risk the

chance of being discharged from his shop altogether. In the spring he is repeatedly called upon to make these sacrifices; but all the other parts of the year he is never certain of one week's constant employment, by which the pawnbroker's shop becomes the only daily refuge of the unfortunate man, ever needy, always wretched, always in debt, always in fear, and if he has the courage to remonstrate (for many of these masters are as haughty as they are the mean, crawling, bowing slaves of their customers of the aristocracy), the poor man is discharged with all the horrors of want, without a shadow of hope, to do as he can. Yet any attempt to avert these grievances, or to remedy these evils, is pronounced by the masters as being the very height of exorbitance, injustice and tyranny; and, not satisfied with the direct opposition they themselves have the power of making to the new regulations, they call upon their customers, the aristocracy, and the public at large, to assist in starving the men into subjection, by withholding their orders; and the nobility and gentry, ever ready to lend their aid in suppressing the rising germ of liberty, exult in the cry, and are unsparing in their promises of support to the masters. One nobleman (according to the *Times*) tells him to get a coat made by women; another says he would rather walk through the streets in kilts, than give any encouragement to the journeymen's combination; another says, he would rather go to a funeral in a yellow coat and blue plush breeches, than support the workmen against their masters; then let it be so, we did not expect any sympathy from that quarter—the Dorchester affair to wit.

“To conclude, for the present. The masters call for the support of the public against the workmen. The workmen now repeat to their friends, to every lover of his country, to every man who has a spark of liberality or humanity, for support against the hostilities of the masters; for it is not now—shall the tailors, or shall they not, be successful? But the question is—shall idle annoyance, despotism, cruelty and tyranny prevail over industry, honour and integrity.

“Fellow-countrymen and Brothers! The Committee trust that you will fairly weigh the statements here made, and compare them with those already put forward by the masters, through the medium of the Press. All that the men require is the just rights of industry; and even should they fail in the present attempt to gain those rights, they will assuredly persevere in their object until they do succeed.

“The Committee have now the pleasure to announce that, having made large purchases of the very best materials—in cloths, cassimeres, waistcoats, &c.,—they have taken large premises, and are about to open shops with all the articles in the trade at prices considerably lower than those now charged by the masters; and also that, should the masters continue their blind opposition to their workmen, the Committee will take especial care that the public shall be made acquainted with the enormous profits they are receiving by the impositions on the public.

“One word more. The Committee would wish to advise those masters who have not already made fortunes—who are content with a fair profit, to pause ere they ruin themselves by listening to the seducing

promises of those whose capital has always militated against their interests. It is easy for men who have unusually large fortunes to determine upon any measures which malice or caprice might dictate; but not so with the industrious man, actuated by the purest motives, who has, for the purpose of fairly distributing the labour among their brethren, sacrificed, during eight months of the year, one shilling per day.

"In conclusion, the Committee, so far from grasping at anything like monopoly, would not have come before the public at all, were they not, in justice to themselves and their posterity, bound to repel the cruel aspersions of their blind opponents. Our objects are honourable,—the means we use for their attainment are fair; we have used no intimidation, and anything of the sort which may happen among men goaded on to madness by cruel oppression and injustice, who have been, by bad laws and the gross neglect of the Legislature, left destitute of the means of acquiring that knowledge which would have guarded them against any ill-feeling for those who are opposed to them, is disclaimed by us.

"Our wish has been to keep and preserve the peace, under all circumstances—our object, the proper division and distribution of labour, and a fair remuneration.

"All orders will for the present be taken at the office, No. 25, Little Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"By order of the Committee,

"JOHN BROWNE,
"Secretary to the Grand Lodge of
Operative Tailors."

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE JOUR-
NEYMEN TAILORS OF LONDON, 13TH
MAY 1834.¹

"AT a very large meeting of the journeymen, held on Tuesday at the Institution of the Industrious Classes, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, the following Resolutions were passed:—

"1. That it is the opinion of this meeting that the principles on which the journeymen tailors of the Metropolis are acting have been grossly misrepresented, and that it is our incumbent duty, by every means in our power, to disabuse the public mind.

"2. That this meeting has been called together for the purpose of removing certain wrong impressions from the minds of our brothers generally, which have been occasioned by the mis-statements which have gone abroad, relating to our resources and other topics.

"3. That whereas interested parties have stated, that our object is to force the employer to pay the same rate of wages to every man, whatever his abilities as a workman may be, we here publicly declare that such is not, nor ever was, our intention, but that our object is to gain a fair remunerat-

¹ Reprinted from *The Pioneer*, 17th May 1834.

ing price for our labour, upon just and equitable principles.

"4. That the friendly feelings and hearty determination of the Trades generally, to support us in this struggle, are duly appreciated by this meeting, and it hereby pledges itself to act worthy of such support.

"5. That as our oppressors have advertised for subscriptions, it will not be derogatory in us to follow their example; we therefore resolve to open books to receive donations or loans, at the following places:—*True Sun* Office, Strand; at 25, Little Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Square; and at the Institution, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square.

"It having been represented to the Committee that a report is current, tending to make it appear that the new regulations proposed would increase the price of articles in the trade in an exorbitant degree, they take this opportunity of refuting such statement, assuring the public that the advance required will only amount to:—On a coat, from 2/6 to 3/—; on a waistcoat, from 9d. to 1/—; on a pair of trowsers, 1/—.

"In reference to the third resolution above stated, the Committee again distinctly aver that the wages demanded by the new regulations were never meant to apply to any but to fully competent workmen; and that no undue claims upon employers of those men who are inferior hands, or who are not really industrious, will be sanctioned or supported by them in any way whatever.

"In accordance with the last of the above resolutions, the Committee beg to inform their friends

and the public, that books are lying at the above-mentioned places, to receive subscriptions or loans from those parties who are able and desirous of aiding the workmen in their endeavours to secure the just reward of labour, and the rights of industry."

CIRCULAR OF THE MASTER TAILORS'
COMMITTEE, 23RD MAY 1834.¹

“THE TAILORS’ STRIKE.

“THE Committee of Master Tailors issued the following circular from the Thatched House Tavern on the 23rd inst. :—

“The Committee of Master Tailors beg to inform the trade that they have this day received reports from all quarters of the metropolis of the most gratifying description. They feel it to be an imperative duty which they owe to themselves, the trade, and the public, to strongly impress on the mind of every master tailor the absolute necessity of requiring every person now in their respective employments, and every one who may be hereafter received into their employment, to sign the following declaration, which has this day been unanimously agreed to by this Committee :—

“We, the undersigned foremen, journeymen tailors, and others, in the employment of —— do declare that we are not members of the trades’ union, that it is not our intention to become members of any such association, nor do we now, nor will we in any way, directly or indirectly, contribute towards the support of any such associations; in attestation of

¹ Reprinted from *The Times*, 26th May 1834.

which we hereunto subscribe our names, this ——
day of —— 1834.

“And this Committee unanimously recommend to the trade to afford the utmost protection, kindness, and consideration, to those men who have been in their employment during the strike.

“JOHN LESLIE, Chairman.”

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE OPERATIVE
MASTER TAILORS OF LONDON, MAY
1834.¹

“OPERATIVE MASTER TAILORS’ MEETING.

“LAST week a meeting of the Operative Master Tailors took place at Saville House, Leicester Square, at which the following resolutions were passed:—

“1. That, in consequence of the unequivocal denial given by the body of journeymen to the envious impression and assertion, that they, the journeymen, were virtually a body of political agitators, combined for the express purpose of dictating to the members and public at large, the united body of operative masters have taken the present opportunity of setting the intentions of the men fairly before the trade at large, with the view of explaining away the above erroneous expression.

“2. That this meeting consider the difference made in the price of clothes, by complying with the demands of the men, will be so trifling, compared with the advantage to the public and themselves, that this meeting think it expedient to concede to their demands for efficient workmen, and for every other workman in proportion to his ability, provided

¹ Reprinted from *The Pioneer*, 24th May 1834.

no time be consumed for refreshment on the master's premises.

“ 3. That it is a well-known fact, admitted by the faculty, that the number of hours the men work in confined, unhealthy workshops, engenders innumerable diseases, especially the life-destroying fistula and consumption, withering hundreds before the age of thirty years, and creating premature old age in the prime of manhood ; while, from the great inequality of the trade, one part of the men are working from fourteen to eighteen hours per day, the other part are idle, reducing the wages to an average of 16/- per week ; thereby exposing men to great privations and vices, consequently leaving numbers of widows and orphans to burden their parishes and other charitable institutions.

“ In opposition to this, a meeting of the great masters was held, at the Thatched House, St. James's Street, which made a declaration that the above meeting was got up by the journeymen themselves, and that they, the masters, were still determined to abide by their first resolutions, passed at Willis's Rooms, and to resist the confederacy of the workmen to the last.”

“REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE MASTER
TAILORS OF LONDON, 27TH MAY 1834.¹”

“THATCHED HOUSE TAVERN, *June 5th*, 1834.

“THE Committee of Master Tailors state, that at a public meeting of the trade held at Willis’s Rooms, King Street, St. James’s, on the 27th of May, the following report was read:—

“REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF MASTER TAILORS.

“Your Committee report that, since they have had the honour to be appointed to carry into effect the resolutions unanimously agreed to by the public meeting of the trade on the 29th of April, they have, with the best of their ability, endeavoured faithfully and diligently to perform the arduous and onerous duties intrusted to them, and they hope their exertions will be approved of by the trade which they represent.

“Having already reported, from time to time, by public advertisement and by circular letters, they will confine themselves at present to the declaration issued by the Committee, and show:—

“1. That the declaration is in strict conformity with the resolutions which were unanimously ap-

¹ Reprinted from *The Times*, 7th June 1834.

proved of by 700 master tailors, and which they were represented to carry into effect.

“To do so they need only call the attention of the trade to the following extract from the resolutions of the 29th of April:—

“‘That in order to encourage those men who are dissatisfied with the imperious mandate of the Trades’ Union, the Committee elected on the previous evening be empowered to appoint houses of call for the reception of all workmen willing to secede from the unionists, and to be employed at the wages hitherto paid, and that this meeting pledge themselves to give exclusive support and encouragement to such men.’

“By this resolution the Committee feel that their duty was clearly prescribed to them by the unanimous opinion thereby expressed. And they will now show:—

“Secondly.—That the declaration they have issued was absolutely called for by the circumstances which have come to the knowledge of the Committee since their appointment. And they call the attention of the trade to a document emanating from the trades’ union, being the abstract of the proceedings of a special meeting of the trades’ union delegates held in London on the 13th, 14th, 15th, 17th, 18th, and 19th of February, 1834. It commences in these words:—

“‘The Committee of Management of the Grand Lodge of United Operative Tailors of London, having convened this special meeting of the delegates’ from various trades’ unions throughout the kingdom,’ &c., &c.

“ But this long document being so important, the Committee will immediately cause it to be reprinted, and a copy delivered to each master tailor. It contains eight propositions, a series of resolutions, and the ten preliminary articles for establishing the Consolidated Union. It then declares that the Executive Council should act as trustees for all funds provided by the Consolidated Union for the adjustment of strikes. It then levies 1/- from each member of all the lodges in the Consolidated Union for raising a fund to employ the men of Derby, and other places. It then orders a new universal sign, and the document concludes in these words :—

“ ‘ Thanks were severally voted to brother J. McDonald, the Chairman of the meeting, and to other members of the Council of the Grand Lodge of Operative Tailors, for their zealous services during the meeting.

‘ By order of the Executive Council,

‘ (Signed) J. BROWNE.’

“ The subject for the deep and serious consideration of every master tailor is, that the journeymen tailors in London are, by their own document, proved to be the great moving power of the trades’ unions, they having summoned delegates from various trades’ unions throughout the kingdom to meet them.

“ The same authority, signed John Browne, ordered the strike on the part of the journeymen tailors.

“ The Committee most deeply lament the sufferings and privations the journeymen have undergone during the strike, as much so as any persons can do ;

but as they have lent their aid to paralyse commerce, to throw out of employment thousands who are unconnected with them, in the privations they are undergoing they only reap the fruits of their own conduct.

“It is well known to your Committee that the funds to support the strike have signally failed; that no one inducement held out to the men to strike has been realised; and that the funds were doled out to them in the merest pittance, and under circumstances of the most signal failure of a great combination founded on injustice to all parties. The masters are in a position to demand, if not indemnity for the past, at least security for the future, and in the opinion of your Committee, they seek this security by the declaration they have issued, and which they have required all those in their employment to sign.

“On the 17th May, last Saturday week, an official notice from the Grand National Consolidated Union was agreed upon by the Executive Council, which states ‘That the best probable mode for the operatives in towns to adopt to improve their immediate condition, until the full and perfect plans of united labour can be carried into execution, is :—

“ ‘ 1. To continue to subscribe a fixed sum weekly, to form a fund to become the foundation of a general bank for the working classes, which fund shall be sacred, and not applied to any other purpose whatever.

“ ‘ 6. All the operatives shall keep in constant employment, upon the best terms they can obtain, until such terms can be made by the Consolidated

Union with the non-producers of wealth and knowledge, as shall liberate all the producing classes from the slavery and degradation in which they have hitherto been and now are.

‘ On behalf of the Executive,

‘ (Signed) E. C. DOUGLAS.’

“ A brief recapitulation of the facts will make the subject more familiar.

“ 1. The journeymen tailors are the moving power of the trades’ union.

“ 2. The Executive Council of the Union ordered the tailors to strike.

“ 3. When the funds fail, the Executive of the trades’ union order the operatives into employment upon the best terms they can obtain, and require them to subscribe a fixed sum weekly to form a fund for future purposes.

“ The Committee of the master tailors put forth the following declaration as a test to try the person who applies for work, whether he has belonged or has ceded from the Trades’ Union or not :—

“ We, the undersigned, foremen, journeymen tailors and others in the employment of —— do declare that we are not members of the trades’ union, that it is not our intention to become members of any such association, nor do we now, nor will we in any way, directly or indirectly, contribute towards the support of any such associations ; in attestation of which we hereunto subscribe our names, this —— day of ——, 1834.

“ And in reply to this declaration the Executive

of the trades' union published a manifesto in the *Weekly True Sun*, in which it said :—

“ Brothers, you must immediately arouse yourselves to understand what you have to do. Reflect well before you resolve ; be calm, and be firm and determined in carrying your resolutions into execution. Let no man or woman, from one end of the kingdom to the other, sign this document. It would be far better to resolve to die, rather than thus be compelled to be the lowest of such slaves to ignorance and presumption.

“ Here then, your Committee have traced, and clearly proved, from official documents of the trades' union, that the present is not a conflict between the master tailors and the journeymen, but the first contest between the master tradesmen and the Grand National Consolidated Trades' Union.

“ The Committee, therefore, call upon every master tailor, every well-wisher to the best interests of the country, to co-operate with them in an earnest and resolute determination to put an end to this unwise, impolitic, and dangerous combination, convinced, as they are, that the continuance of such an association is fraught with the most dangerous consequences to the men, their employers, and to society ; and to the termination of which associations, so far as the master tailors are concerned, they are individually and collectively pledged in the face of the whole country.

JOHN LESLIE, Chairman.

“ It was then moved that this Report be received and adopted. An amendment was proposed ‘ That .

the Declaration be omitted ;' a division took place :—

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“The Committee on the 29th of May issued the following circular :—

“It being the duty of the Committee to carry into effect the spirit and the letter of the resolutions of the public meetings of the trade, they have resolved to republish the names of all the master tailors who subscribed to the resolutions of the 29th of April and the 27th of May ; and as the utmost publicity will be given to this statement, it is highly desirable that the most correct information be obtained. The Committee therefore request you will favour them with an answer to the following questions, to enable them to classify the names for publication :—

“1. Have you required the persons in your employment to sign the Declaration ?

“2. Have you discharged those persons who have refused to sign the Declaration ?

“3. Have you any persons in your employment who have not signed the Declaration ?

“4. Do you decline to afford the Committee the required information ? If so your name will be published as refusing it.

“The written answers to these questions enable the Committee to state, that the following master tailors have no person in their employment who has not signed the Declaration.”¹

¹ Here follows a list, which is here omitted, of 36 Committee-men and officers, and 420 other employers. They appear to have included practically all the good West End firms.

“The Committee have also the very pleasing duty to inform the trade and the public, that, according to the latest returns made to them, the number of journeymen tailors who have seceded from the trades’ union, and signed the above Declaration, is about 4000, and the Committee hope that they will very shortly have added to the number, every industrious, respectable and well-disposed journeyman tailor in the metropolis.

“JOHN LESLIE, Chairman.”

“RULES OF THE AMALGAMATED SOCIETY
OF JOURNEYMEN TAILORS,

“AS AGREED TO BY THE CONFERENCE OF DEPUTIES
OF THE TAILORS’ SOCIETIES THROUGHOUT ENG-
LAND, ASSEMBLED IN THE MECHANICS’ INSTITU-
TION, DAVID STREET, MANCHESTER, ON THE
12TH OF MARCH 1866, AND FIVE FOLLOWING
DAYS. CALLED TOGETHER BY CIRCULAR OF
THE MANCHESTER SOCIETY, DATED JANUARY
29TH, 1866.¹

“PREAMBLE.²

“MUCH good has been accomplished by Trade
Unions in times past, and still greater results remain

¹ The rules as reprinted here are not exactly in the form in which they were issued to the Society. At the close of the Conference a Committee was appointed to draft a preface, and to draw up in proper form the rules agreed to. No copy of the rules as issued by this Committee now exists, and I have therefore been compelled to reprint the resolutions exactly as passed by the Conference. A few other resolutions, chiefly in the form of suggestions to the local societies, were passed, as well as some appointing a secretary, officers, and council for the ensuing year, but they do not call for reproduction. In regard to those trade resolutions marked with a +, the Executive Council, at its subsequent meetings, declared that they were not rules of the Amalgamation, “but recommendations of the Conference with a view to reform.” See Quarterly Reports of the Society, June to December 1866.

² Taken from a copy of the Rules as reprinted after revision in 1875, which appears to be the earliest copy now in existence.

to be achieved in the future. For many years our trade has been a shame to ourselves and a by-word to others. The Rules herein contained have proved to be the beginning of a better state of things, and a new era in our trade, for by a strict adherence to rule and discipline we may acquire a knowledge of business, qualifying us for positions of responsibility and trust.

“The Rules of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, as now submitted, are constituted to mutually relieve each other in distress, disease and death. It is well known that Societies whose funds are available for trade protection, aid to members seeking employment, support of their sick, infirm and superannuated members, and for affording assistance to families bereaved by death, have long been the pride of all intelligent men; and on all hands it is admitted that those who by forethought and self-denial make such provision for themselves and families, contribute to their social, moral, and intellectual advancement. To carry these principles into full effect, it is necessary that certain rules and regulations should be laid down to insure certainty to our endeavours, and a spirit of unity to our actions.

“Rules are an implied contract between man and man—a bond entered into by mutual agreement for the benefit of all. It is imperative, therefore, that they should be formed on the strictest principles of equity and justice, affording equal protection to all, and acknowledging no difference in their application. Being convinced by experience that true unity can only be achieved by combining trade protection and benevolent objects in the benefits of our association,

it has been endeavoured to frame the Rules of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors so that individual right might be respected as well as the general weal secured.

“Unhappily, in a fluctuating trade, many who depend for the necessities of life on their daily toil, are often deprived of employment in the most inclement season; they wander through the country from city to town, and from town to village, seeking employment, but alas! in vain; this continues until (upon the mind of an honest man) the thought rests like an incubus, When and how shall I relieve myself of this degradation? Devoid of humanity must be the man who is not willing to relieve those distresses by uniting to support his fellow-men travelling in search of employment; and wretched must be the character who voluntarily avails himself of such benevolence as a means of existence in preference to honest and respectable employment.

“The Amalgamation offers the widest possible basis of unity. We know that without a union of all, our efforts would, to some extent, be crippled. If any were left out our motives might be suspected and our actions misunderstood. Let, therefore, no one mistake our position. Ours is no partial movement calculated to benefit a few; we embrace all, act for all. Let all then join with us, and help to win and keep the reforms we propose to accomplish.

“Health is precarious, and accident or disease may in a moment put an end to the efforts of the most active and expert individual. Illness of a few weeks or months might reduce him to a state of want and misery.

“The tailor who has used the precaution to become a member of an Institution, has, to some extent, a comfortable and permanent provision against the exigencies of disease, accident and death. He must feel that he is reaping the fruit of his own industry and forethought; that he has secured by his prudent care an honourable independence against the most common misfortunes of life; and even when incapacitated from earning an adequate livelihood, an honest pride of independence remains to elevate and ennoble his character.

“It has been proved that isolation is the worst position in which a working man can be placed, more particularly with those whose interests are closely identical. It is obvious that any single individual who would trust to his own unassisted efforts for support, would be placed in a very different situation from those who are members of this Society, for however industrious and parsimonious, he might not be able to accomplish his object, inasmuch as any unforeseen difficulty might arise, either in his trade or by accident, or an obstinate attack of sickness, by throwing him out of employment and forcing him to consume the savings he had accumulated against old age, reduce him to a state of indigence, and oblige him to become dependent on the bounty of others. ‘Woe to him who is alone when he falleth, for he has no one to help him up.’

“Justice requires that those who are called upon to obey rules should have a voice in their enactment. An extended system of representation is also the surest guarantee against the encroachments of power; therefore the right of representation as at

present secured is calculated to give equal justice to all.

“We contend that no Society, Association or insurance is so well calculated to achieve success, and give more general benefits to their members, than a trade society. Whilst it not only secures to them all the benefits held forth by a friendly society, by its unity and usefulness it enhances the position of its members as workmen, who are in a position by thorough organisation to resist encroachments on their interests, but is an indispensable means of effecting whatever changes may be discovered as desirable between the relative position of employer and employed.

“These are some of the reasons for forming our present Society, which by one code of rules will be bound together, one interest keeping us united and strong. With concentrated efforts we may patiently wait for results. Let this safeguard of our interests engage our earnest attention, and let us promote its advancement with energy, and take opportunities of making it known and valued by those whose duty and interest it is to unite with us. Doing this, we leave to future generations the means to promote their well-being, trusting that posterity may see the universal establishment of the principles enunciated, to the end that they may derive greater benefits arising out of their unity, industry and forethought.

“RULES.

“1. That the Society shall be called the Amalgamated Society of Journeymen Tailors, for the

protection and furtherance of the general interests of the trade, and the moral and social elevation of its members.

" 2. That a Conference shall be held annually, in such city or town as the previous Conference may determine, to decide all questions of importance to the trade, as well as to enact new laws, amend existing ones, and transact any business to the interest of the Amalgamation. Every Society can send one representative, and those of more than a hundred members an additional representative for every additional hundred or fractional part of a hundred of their numbers.

" 3. That this Amalgamation shall be governed by a Council consisting of nine members, including President, Vice-President and Secretary. Five to form a quorum.

" 4. That the duty of the President shall be to convene all special meetings, preside at all meetings, sign all minutes and all cheques upon the Treasurer. The duty of the Vice-President shall be to act as President in his absence.

" 5. That the duty of the Secretary shall be to keep all books belonging to his office in a clear and legible manner, attend all meetings, read and enter all minutes, transact all written correspondence on behalf of the Amalgamation, and sign all cheques upon the Treasurer. He shall conduct all correspondence through the local secretaries. He shall give security for all property entrusted to his care, and his salary shall be fixed by the Annual Conference.

" 6. That the duty of the Treasurer shall be to receive all moneys on behalf of the Amalgamation,

and pay all accounts when properly vouched by the Chairman and Secretary; he shall keep a correct account of all moneys received and paid by him; he shall give security for all moneys entrusted to him.

“7. The Council shall meet on the first Monday in every month for the transaction of business.

“8. That all Societies belonging to the Amalgamation pay from their funds the sum of threepence per member quarterly, in advance, to the management fund.

“9. That the fund of the Amalgamation shall be for the maintenance of premises, payment of officers, printing, and for the general purposes of the Amalgamation.

“10. That for the purpose of meeting any extraordinary expenditure, the Council shall propose a levy, subject to the decision of a majority of the Societies comprising the Amalgamation. All such levies to be paid weekly.

“11. That any Society being three months in arrears of subscription, and one week in arrears of levies, shall forfeit all claim to the protection of the Amalgamation, but the Council may, upon a promise to pay arrears due by a stated time, grant protection; provided always that for a second offence in twelve months no claim for protection will be allowed until all arrears are fully paid.

“12. It is to be distinctly understood that all towns labouring under any grievance will use all legitimate means in their power to bring the matter to an amicable adjustment before requesting the aid of the Executive Council. In the event of such means

failing, it will be the duty of the Secretary in any of the said towns where a grievance exists, to forward, in clear and lucid terms, the matter in dispute to the Executive Council, who shall take immediate steps to consider the case and recommend a course of action, subject to the approval of a majority of the members in the Amalgamation; pending whose decision the aggrieved parties may continue to work. Towns not to vote upon their own questions.

“13. The decision of all towns to be lodged with the General Secretary within ten days. Should such decision stamp the case as a valid grievance, it will be the duty of the Executive Council to withdraw the men and declare the town or towns on strike, intimate the same to all towns in the Amalgamation, and recommend that no men apply for work in any of the towns during the dispute.

“14. That in all cases the strike aliment shall be twelve shillings per week.

“15. That in no case shall any town strike without the sanction of the Executive Council; and no town will be eligible to come upon the Amalgamation before the first Monday in April, 1867. No Society will be eligible to come on the Amalgamation before it has been three clear months a branch thereof, and conformed to all its laws.

“16. That the General Secretary shall forward to each Society a quarterly report setting forth the business that has been gone through by the Council, and an account of the receipts and disbursements for the quarter. Any Society wishing to propose new laws or amend existing ones, must send notice of the same to the General Secretary at least ten clear days before

the Christmas quarter, so that it may appear in the circular for that quarter, and be properly circulated throughout the Amalgamation previous to being discussed at the Conference; and nothing can be entertained by such Conference unless this rule is complied with, except in case of a trade dispute or strike, they shall be entertained at any time.

" 17. That Societies shall have the management of their own funds, and the regulation of their own local affairs; the Amalgamation being for the sole purposes of trade.

" 18. That local secretaries shall furnish to the General Secretary a quarterly return containing the number of their members, stating increase or decrease, state of trade, and an account of all cases of delinquency on the part of members or non-members. The report to be sent ten days before the quarter day.

" 19. That any secretary neglecting to send such report, his Society shall be fined the sum of 2/6; and any secretary sending a false report, his Society shall be fined the sum of 5/-.

" + 20. That this Conference thinks that 57 hours per week should be the standard time to work; and that the hours of labour should be from six o'clock in the morning, to six o'clock in the evening, and giving over at two o'clock on Saturdays, leaving the different Societies to settle the question of meal hours. And any time worked beyond these hours should be paid time and a quarter; but it is desirable this should be a spontaneous effort on the part of the men. Secretaries to send reports of its agitation, as it progresses, to the General Secretary.

" + 21. That one uniform number of hours be paid

per garment throughout the Amalgamation, and that the price per hour be left to each town in the Amalgamation. That the Executive Council take means to procure the drawing up of a general log.

" + 22. That we do not recognise day wage men.

" 23. That the subject of apprentices be referred to the Executive Council with a view to the possibility of adopting some system with reference thereto, and report to the next Conference.

" 24. That for the next twelve months the Executive Council sit in Manchester.

" 25. That the President and Secretary reside in Manchester for the next twelve months.

" 26. That the Secretary's salary shall be £78 per year, or 30/- per week.

" 27. That the pay of the Executive Council, when on business of the Amalgamation, shall be as follows: For those who reside in Manchester, 5/- per day; for those who reside beyond Manchester, 10/-; and second class fare to and from the city or town where they may reside.

" 28. That the next Conference shall be held in London, on the second Monday in March, 1867.

" + 29. That this Amalgamation will use its best endeavours to limit, as much as possible, out-door working; and, where it cannot be avoided, will endeavour to procure a higher price to outworkers to counterbalance their extra expenses, so as to some extent do away with the necessity of working longer hours than those who work in shops.

" + 30. That the workman ought to get one-half of all work done by the machine.

" 31. That this Conference is of opinion that re-

course to a strike should only be an extreme measure, and most cordially approve of the present efforts to prevent strikes by establishing Councils of Arbitration.

“32. That in the event of any Society being dissolved, the members wishing to remain in the Amalgamation shall (upon giving proof of membership) be received by, and shall pay and conform to the rules of the nearest Society in the Amalgamation.

“33. Any officer being discharged from his employment for holding office, or any member being delegated on the business of the Amalgamation, and losing his employment in consequence, shall be allowed the wages of his town until he find employment satisfactory to the members of his Society, and shall be paid the expense of removing himself and family to where he may obtain employment.

“34. That any member of the Amalgamation removing from one place to another, shall be admitted a member of the nearest Society in the Amalgamation in the locality to which he removes, upon producing a clear card from the Society of which he was last a member.

“35. That whilst admitting the justice of a minimum rate of entrance, we do not think it advisable to alter the present rates, but refer the subject to the next Conference.

“36. That one uniform card be issued by the Executive to the different Societies at such a price as will pay for printing, and to prevent fraud the different Societies shall have a stamp, so as to indicate from whence the card was issued, cleared, or relieved, and no fresh superannuated cards to be issued after the 1st of September 1866.

" 37. That any member travelling in search of employment shall be entitled to Sunday's rest, in any town he may be in.

" 38. Any member bringing disgrace upon himself or the Amalgamation, his travelling card to be stopped, until he shall go before the Committee of the town he may be in, and if he has done wrong they shall have the power of stopping his card, or inflicting such penalty as may meet the justice of the case.

" 39. Members travelling in search of employment to be charged contribution from date of last relief.

" 40. That any Society being in arrears of subscription or levies, according to the 11th Rule, the cards issued by them after that date shall not be relieved in any town over which the Amalgamation shall have control.

" 41. That a form be issued by the General Secretary for local secretaries to fill up stating the number of cards issued, and any information useful to the Executive.

" 42. That the first subscription be sent to the Secretary not later than the 16th of April 1866.

" 43. The financial year to commence on the 1st of March, and terminate on the last day in February.

" 44. That the Executive Council appoint auditors previous to the next Conference.

" +45. That this Conference recommend to employers the necessity of providing proper workshops for their workmen; and we consider that a good workshop should allow of 1000 cubic feet of breathing space to each man—should have side lights—lime-washed walls—proper ventilation, and should also be provided with proper sanitary conveniences, and a supply of

water; and should in no case be below the level of the ground on any side.

“46. That Societies wishing to join this Amalgamation, shall agree to and sign the following form:—

“We, the undersigned, hereby agree to conform to the foregoing Rules, and pledge ourselves to use all legitimate means for the consolidation of the Amalgamation, as also to advance the general interest and well-being of the trade; in proof of which we hereunto attach our signatures as Chairman and Secretary.”

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THIS list is not offered as an exhaustive one of all the books and pamphlets dealing with the tailoring trade, but is confined to a collection of those which throw some light on the combinations of the journeymen or the industrial organisation of the trade. In all cases where I have been able to trace a work in the British Museum I have added "Brit. Mus." and the reference number. A few are only to be found in other libraries, which are mentioned. Those marked "Foxwell Collection" are in the possession of Professor H. S. Foxwell, Cambridge; while those marked "Webb Collection" are in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb:—

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